

2024–2025 | 125th Season
Marian Anderson Hall

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Sunday, June 1, at 2:00

Sunday, June 8, at 2:00

Richard Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*

Conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Libretto by the composer

Act I—At sea, on the deck of Tristan's ship during the crossing from Ireland to Cornwall (one hour, 20 minutes)

Intermission (25 minutes)

Act II—King Marke's castle in Cornwall (one hour, five minutes)

Intermission (25 minutes)

Act III—Outside Kareol, Tristan's castle in Brittany (one hour, 20 minutes)

Performed in German with English supertitles

This program runs approximately four hours, 45 minutes.

Stuart Skelton Tenor (Tristan, a Breton nobleman, adopted heir of King Marke)

Nina Stemme Soprano (Isolde, an Irish princess betrothed to King Marke)

Karen Cargill Mezzo-Soprano (Brangäne, Isolde's maid)

Brian Mulligan Baritone (Kurwenal, Tristan's friend)

Tareq Nazmi Bass (King Marke, King of Cornwall)

Freddie Ballentine Tenor (Melot, a courtier)

Jonghyun Park Tenor (A Sailor's Voice/A Shepherd)

Nathan Schludecker Baritone (A Steersman)

Tenors and Basses of the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir (Sailors, knights, and esquires)

Donald Palumbo Director

Dylan Evans Stage Director

Julius Sanchez Stage Manager

Christopher Bergen Supertitles

Tony Solitro Supertitles Operator

Jonathan C. Kelly Rehearsal Accompanist

Generous support for these concerts is given by **Oscar L. Tang and Agnes Hsu-Tang**.

Additional support is given by **Judith Broudy**.

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Synopsis

ACT I

At sea, on the deck of Tristan's ship during the crossing from Ireland to Cornwall

Isolde, an Irish princess, is being taken to Cornwall aboard the ship of Tristan, whose uncle, King Marke, plans to marry her. She becomes enraged by a sailor's song about an Irish girl, and her maid, Brangäne, tries to calm her. Isolde interrogates Tristan, but he replies evasively. His companion Kurwenal loudly ridicules the Irish women and sings a mocking verse about Morold, Isolde's fiancé, who was killed by Tristan when he came to Cornwall to exact tribute for Ireland. Isolde, barely able to control her anger, tells Brangäne how the wounded Tristan came to her in disguise after his fight with Morold so that he could be healed by Isolde's knowledge of herbs and magic, which she learned from her mother. Isolde explains to Brangäne that she recognized Tristan, but her determination to take revenge for Morold's death dissolved when he pleadingly looked her in the eyes. She now bitterly regrets her reluctance to kill him and wishes death for him and herself. Brangäne reminds her that to marry a king is no dishonor and that Tristan is simply performing his duty. Isolde maintains that his behavior shows his lack of love for her and asks Brangäne to prepare her mother's death potion. Kurwenal tells the women to prepare to leave the ship, as shouts from the deck announce the sighting of land. Isolde insists that she will not accompany Tristan until he apologizes for his offenses. He appears and greets her with cool courtesy. When she tells him she wants satisfaction for Morold's death, Tristan offers her his sword, but she will not kill him. Instead, Isolde suggests that she and Tristan make peace with a drink of friendship. He understands that she means to poison them both, but still drinks, and she does the same. Expecting death, they exchange a long look of love, then fall into each other's arms. Brangäne admits that she has in fact mixed a love potion, as sailors's voices announce the ship's arrival in Cornwall.

ACT II

King Marke's castle in Cornwall

In the garden of Marke's castle, Isolde waits impatiently for a rendezvous with Tristan, while distant horns signal the king's departure on a hunting party. Isolde believes that the party is far off, but Brangäne warns her about spies, particularly Melot, a jealous knight whom she has noticed watching Tristan. Isolde replies that Melot is Tristan's friend. She sends Brangäne off to stand watch and puts out the warning torch. When Tristan appears, she welcomes him passionately. They praise the darkness that shuts out the light of conventionality and false appearances and agree that they feel secure in the night's embrace. Brangäne's distant voice warns that it will be daylight soon, but the lovers are oblivious to any danger and compare the night to death, which will ultimately unite them. Kurwenal rushes in with a warning: The king and his followers have returned, led by Melot, who denounces the lovers. Moved and disturbed, Marke declares that it was Tristan himself who urged him to marry and choose the bride. He does not understand how someone so dear to him could dishonor him in such a way. Tristan cannot answer. He asks Isolde if she

will follow him into the realm of death. When she accepts, Melot attacks Tristan, who falls wounded into Kurwenal's arms.

ACT III

Outside Kareol, Tristan's castle in Brittany

Back at his castle, the mortally ill Tristan is tended by Kurwenal. A shepherd inquires about his master, and Kurwenal explains that only Isolde, with her magic arts, could save him. The shepherd agrees to play a cheerful tune on his pipe as soon as he sees a ship approaching. Hallucinating, Tristan imagines the realm of night where he will return with Isolde. He thanks Kurwenal for his devotion, then envisions Isolde's ship approaching, but the shepherd's mournful tune signals that the sea is still empty. Tristan recalls the melody, which he heard as a child. It reminds him of the duel with Morold, and he wishes Isolde's medicine had killed him then instead of making him suffer now. The shepherd's tune finally turns cheerful. Tristan gets up from his sickbed in growing agitation and tears off his bandages, letting his wounds bleed. Isolde rushes in, and he falls, dying, in her arms. When the shepherd announces the arrival of another ship, Kurwenal assumes it carries Marke and Melot, and barricades the gate. Brangäne's voice is heard from outside, trying to calm Kurwenal, but he will not listen and stabs Melot before he is killed himself by the king's soldiers. Marke is overwhelmed with grief at the sight of the dead Tristan, while Brangäne explains to Isolde that the king has come to pardon the lovers. Isolde, transfigured, does not hear her, and with a vision of Tristan beckoning her to the world beyond, she sinks dying upon his body.

—Reprinted courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera

The Music

Tristan and Isolde

Richard Wagner

Born in Leipzig, May 22, 1813

Died in Venice, February 13, 1883



The history of Western music is marked by momentous compositions that change the landscape, or rather, the soundscape. Sometimes such turning points are only appreciated retrospectively. Bach's greatest works had minimal significance in his own time but were overwhelmingly influential once they began to be discovered nearly a century later. Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Beethoven's Ninth (as well as some of his earlier symphonies), and Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* proved immediately provocative and influential.

Several of Richard Wagner's operas might justly be added to this list but *Tristan and Isolde* tops them all. It points dramatically toward Modernism, decades before Freud, in its exploration of sexuality, death, heroism, loyalty, betrayal, and more. As for its transformative musical innovations, it is impressively "through-composed," taking form in new directions. Unlike number operas with recitatives, arias, and ensembles, Wagner aimed for "endless melody," a stream of music in which every note is meaningful. There are also its historic harmonic innovations, the heightened chromaticism that furthered the decline of traditional procedures and led ultimately to atonal music. This chromaticism (from the Greek word for color), the presence of pitches from outside the diatonic scale, adds to colorful effects that Wagner further enhances with his magical orchestration. Richard Strauss said it opened "the door to new sounds."

It is the miraculous mixture of melody, harmony, counterpoint, and instrumentation that made *Tristan* historically decisive musically. Wagner seems to have recognized this as the project was nearing completion: "the process of correcting the proofs of the second act, while I was simultaneously in the throes of composing the ecstasies of the third act, had the strangest, even uncanny, effect on me; ... I realized with complete clarity that I had written the most audacious and original work of my life."

An Opera Composer Given *Tristan's* enormous importance, Wagner's path to get to this point is all the more remarkable. His musical output is devoted almost entirely to opera. The instrumental and vocal pieces he wrote as a teenager—piano works, songs, and a symphony—are undistinguished; few composers ended up so far from where they began. He composed 13 operas, the first three of which are rarely performed. In the 1840s came *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*. Wagner then took some years off to reevaluate his creative mission and produced lengthy articles and books expounding a new theory of music drama.

Wagner began to put his ideas into action with a wildly ambitious venture, the four-part *The Ring of the Nibelung*, on which he toiled for a quarter century. Part way through the project he had a reality check: This massive tetralogy had slim prospects for publication or staged performances. He put the *Ring* aside in the middle of *Siegfried*, the third installment, to write what he envisioned as more modest works: *Tristan and Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Only after completing those operas, which assumed vast proportions in themselves, did he complete the *Ring* in 1874 and then write *Parsifal*, which premiered seven months before his death at age 69 in February 1883.

A Meeting of Life and Art Wagner first thought about composing an opera about the ancient Celtic tale of Tristan and Isolde in 1854. He wrote to Franz Liszt (later his father-in-law) that “since I have never enjoyed in life the actual happiness of love, I want to erect another monument to this most beautiful of all dreams, in which, from beginning to end, this love is going to satisfy its hunger properly for once. I have worked out a *Tristan and Isolde* in my head—the simplest and at the same time most full-bodied musical conception.”

At the time Wagner was consumed with the *Ring* but decided in the summer of 1857 to write *Tristan and Isolde*, which he finished two years later. The path to its premiere was arduous. Plans for productions in Paris, Karlsruhe, and Vienna fell through, in part because of the opera’s length, large orchestra, and the incredible vocal demands it places on the title characters. It finally premiered in Munich in June 1865, conducted by Hans von Bülow, whose wife, Cosima (Liszt’s daughter), Wagner would later marry.

Tristan and Isolde is the ultimate love story, one that Wagner identified with intensely. The subject was timely because he was living the plot to some degree, although it has long been debated whether in this regard art followed life or the other way around. Wagner, unhappily married to his first wife, became infatuated with Mathilde Wesendonck, the wife of his principal benefactor. Otto Wesendonck was a silk merchant who covered Wagner’s considerable debts, provided a stipend, and gave him housing. Due to his earlier political subversion, Wagner was exiled from his native Germany for more than a decade and desperate for a place to live. Otto put at his disposal a house adjacent to his villa in Zurich.

A love triangle soon arose and while the degree of Wagner’s intimacy with Mathilde is debated—Wagner said their love had to be chaste—their correspondence chronicles his passionate emotions. He set five of her poems to music in the *Wesendonck-Lieder*, two of which he actually labeled as “Studies for *Tristan and Isolde*” and that share musical themes with the opera.

Another new figure in Wagner’s life at the time was the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), whose four-part *The World as Will and Representation* (1818) captivated him. (Their relationship was not personal—they never met—and the philosopher had no use for Wagner’s music.) According to Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of music the world of visible appearance (Representation) was but a dim reflection of the Will, which he relates to music and believed held the truth, the highest of all the arts. Wagner was transformed by his ideas and rethought some of his earlier positions.

A Medieval Tale Wagner's principal literary source is the 13th-century epic poem *Tristan* by Gottfried von Strassburg. Like many other tales of the time (and later) it features a love triangle with a young couple and an older husband, familiar from Arthurian legends of Lancelot and Guinevere and later from Claude Debussy's *Pelleas and Melisande*, which is much indebted to Wagner. Common themes of courtly love include secret assignations, a faithful friend and watchful nurse, the cursing of the coming of dawn as a night of love must end. Wagner used Strassburg's Celtic legend but added many of his own touches and combined it with other stories. (Wagner is unusual among great opera composers in that he wrote his own librettos.)

The stage is set in the famous Prelude, a frequent excerpt on orchestral concerts, that Wagner premiered in Paris in 1860, five years before the complete opera. After a yearning leap of a minor sixth from the unaccompanied cellos that then descends chromatically, the first harmony that sounds is the "Tristan chord," probably the most famous chord in Western music. It is a piercing dissonance that needs to be resolved, but it is not, which leaves the listener frustrated and unsatisfied.

What a brilliant strategy on Wagner's part to delay that gratification. And delay. It is the sonic metaphor that guides the entire opera: He delays resolving the chord for more than four hours—that is, until the very end, when it is struck one final time. The frustration in resolving the "Tristan chord" conveys the deep longing between the two main characters, a love that remains unconsummated. Wagner described the Prelude in a program note: "Taking on the role of suitor for his uncle, the king, Tristan brings Isolde to him. They love one another. From the most timid complaint of unquenchable longing, from the most delicate quivering, up through the most fearsome outburst confessing a hopeless love, the feeling here traces every phase of this hopeless struggle against inner passion—until, sinking back unconscious, that passion seems to be extinguished in death."

A Closer Look The first act unfolds at sea as the young knight Tristan brings the resistant Irish princess Isolde to Cornwall to marry his uncle, King Marke. The first vocal music we hear is that of a sailor singing an unaccompanied song about an Irish princess. (Stage music—music that is heard as music within the opera, plays a crucial part in *Tristan* at key moments.) Isolde takes offence, thinking the song is about her, and during a lengthy encounter with her maid and confidant, Brangäne, provides background of her situation. She then sees Tristan, whom she had nursed back to health despite his killing her former betrothed, because of the pitiful look in his eyes. She regrets not having killed him and now seeks vengeance. Isolde's mother is a master of potions and has provided her with one for death and another for love.

Isolde orders Brangäne to prepare a death potion, which Tristan and she willingly drink, but the maid substitutes the elixir of love instead. Wagner's stage direction here sets the scene: "Seized with shuddering, they gaze with deepest emotion, but fixed expressions, into one another's eyes, in which the look of defiance to death fades and melts into the glow of passion. Trembling seizes them, they convulsively clutch their hearts and pass their hands over their brows. Their glances again seek to meet, sink in confusion and once more turn

with growing longing upon one another.” The act ends as the sailors see land with King Marke approaching to festive brass fanfares.

The second act opens with horn calls as King Marke heads off with his entourage on a hunting expedition. There follows a scene with Isolde and Brangäne, who worriedly says she will stand guard as Tristan comes to Isolde’s chamber. The nocturnal love scene between Tristan and Isolde unfolds as a very long duet that ebbs and flows before building to a height of passion, some of it using the same music that will end the opera. At the point of its climax, Tristan’s loyal friend Kurwenal enters exclaiming “Save yourself, Tristan” as King Marke and his courtiers burst on the scene. Melot, Tristan’s ambitious rival, has betrayed him. In a lengthy and deeply felt monologue, Marke sings of loyalty and betrayal, sentiments that commentators relate to Wagner’s personal circumstances with Otto Wesendonck in the king’s position. Tristan is mortally wounded at the hands of Melot.

The final act also begins with stage music, this time the unaccompanied pipes of an old shepherd (played by the English horn). Tristan is back at his castle in Brittany, where Kurwenal has taken him to die. He hallucinates that Isolde has returned to him. She soon arrives by ship—King Marke plans to unite the lovers, but it is all too late. Tristan dies; Isolde sings her final “transfiguration”—popularly known as the “Liebestod” (Love Death)—and collapses next to her beloved.

Wagner described the ending in a program note: “And yet, what fate has kept apart in life now lives on, transfigured, in death: the gates to their union are open. Isolde, dying atop Tristan’s body, perceives the blessed fulfillment of her burning desire: eternal union in measureless space, no bounds, no fetters, indivisible!” We hear the “Tristan chord” one final time, now resolved with what Strauss called “the most beautifully orchestrated B major chord in the history of music.”

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Christopher H. Gibbs is James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College and has been the program annotator for The Philadelphia Orchestra since 2000. He is the author of several books on Schubert and Liszt, and the co-author, with Richard Taruskin, of The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition.

Wagner composed Tristan and Isolde from 1857 to 1859.

The Philadelphia Orchestra first performed music from Tristan and Isolde, the Prelude to Act I, in December 1904, with Fritz Scheel. The Orchestra has performed the entire opera only once before, on subscription concerts in October 1934, which were billed as the first performance in America without cuts. The cast included Hans Grahl (Tristan), Marga Dannenberg (Isolde), Lyuba Senderowna (Brangäne), Emanuel List (King Marke), Julius Huehn (Kurwenal), Wilbur Evans (Melot), the Philadelphia Orchestra Opera Chorus, Fritz Reiner (conductor), Herbert Graf (stage director), Donald Oenslager (production designer), Frank Poole Bevan (costume designer), and Louis Erhardt (lighting designer).

The opera’s score calls for three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, two English horns (one on stage), two clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, 10 horns (six on stage), six trumpets (three on stage), six trombones (three on stage), tuba, timpani, percussion (cymbals, triangle), harp, violins, nine vocal soloists, and mixed chorus.

Performance time is approximately four hours.

Program note © 2025.



The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives, a commitment to its diverse communities, and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive and inclusive future for classical music and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united. Today, The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts brings the greatest performances and most impactful education and community programs to audiences in Philadelphia and beyond.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community. In addition to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today's composers, Yannick and the Orchestra are committed to performing and recording the works of previously overlooked composers.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, around the community, over the airwaves, and online. The Kimmel Center has been the ensemble's home since 2001, and in 2024 Verizon

Hall at the Kimmel Center was officially rededicated as Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; the free annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Concert; School Concerts; sensory-friendly concerts; open rehearsals; the School Ensemble Program; All-City Orchestra Fellowships; and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a now-five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 14 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award-winning *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

Music and Artistic Director



Yannick Nézet-Séguin is currently in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. An inspired leader, Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is both an evolutionary and a revolutionary, developing the mighty “Philadelphia Sound” in new ways. His collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him “phenomenal,” adding that “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.”

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling and sought-after talents of his generation. He became the third music director of New York’s Metropolitan Opera in 2018. In addition, he has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. In 2017 he became the third-ever honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He served as music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles and at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick has shown a deep commitment to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today’s composers and by performing the music of under-appreciated composers of the past. In 2018 he signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 14 releases on that label, including *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*, which won a GRAMMY® Award for Best Orchestral Performance in 2022.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal’s Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductors, most notably Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada; Companion to the Order of Arts and Letters of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Montreal; an Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres; *Musical America’s* 2016 Artist of the Year; ECHO KLASSIK’s 2014 Conductor of the Year; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; Canada’s National Arts Centre Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; the Oskar Morawetz Award; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, the University of Montreal, the University of Pennsylvania, Laval University, and Drexel University.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit philorch.org/conductor.

Cast

Gubmundur Ingólfsson



Tenor **Stuart Skelton** (Tristan) makes his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances. One of the finest heldentenenors on the stage today, he also sings the title role of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* with Marek Janowski and the Dresden Philharmonic this season. Other highlights include the title role in Wagner's *Parsifal* and Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* with Mr. Janowski and Tokyo's NHK Symphony; Wagner's *Die Walküre* with the Sydney Symphony and Simone Young; and the first act of *Die Walküre* at the Teatro

Comunale Bologna with Oksana Lyniv on the podium. Mr. Skelton first sang Tristan at the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden in a new production by Mariusz Trelński and subsequently opened the Metropolitan Opera's 2016–17 season in the role in a production conducted by Simon Rattle. His first solo album, *Shining Knight*, presents a program of Wagner, Griffes, and Barber accompanied by Asher Fisch and the West Australian Symphony. His expansive recording catalogue also includes *Tristan and Isolde* with Mr. Fisch and the West Australian Symphony and Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* with Edward Gardner and the Bergen Philharmonic, which was nominated for a GRAMMY Award.

Neda Araxa



Swedish-born soprano **Nina Stemme** (Isolde) first sang Isolde in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* at the 2003 Glyndebourne Festival, with the legendary Wagnerian soprano Birgit Nilsson helping her learn the role. She subsequently made a recording with Plácido Domingo singing Tristan and Antonio Pappano conducting the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Her diverse repertoire also includes Wagnerian sopranos Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* and Kundry in *Parsifal*; the title roles in Strauss's *Salome* and *Elektra*; and the title roles in Puccini's *The Girl of the*

Golden West and *Turandot*. She has sung at the world's leading opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Bayreuth Festival, the Vienna State Opera, and the Royal Opera House. In 1993 she won Mr. Domingo's Operalia competition. Other awards include the Laurence Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera, the International Opera Award for Best Female Singer, and the *Opera News* Award. In 2018 she was awarded the prestigious Birgit Nilsson Prize in a ceremony at the Royal Swedish Opera with the Swedish royal family in attendance. She makes her Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances.

Cast

Nadine Boyd



Scottish mezzo-soprano **Karen Cargill** (Brangäne) made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2013. Following her critically acclaimed appearances as Brangäne at the Glyndebourne Festival, she returns to the role this season in these current performances and with Simon Rattle and the Bavarian Radio Orchestra. She also makes her role debut as Brigitte in Korngold's *Die tote Stadt* in concerts with the Boston Symphony and Andris Nelsons. Other season highlights include returns to the Montreal Symphony for Schoenberg's

Gurrelieder with Rafael Payare, the San Francisco Symphony for Verdi's Requiem with Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Toronto Symphony for Mozart's Requiem with Jukka-Pekka Saraste, and the San Diego Symphony for Mahler's Symphony No. 3 with Mr. Payare. In the 2023–24 season she sang Fricka in Wagner's *Die Walküre* on tour with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and Yannick Nézet-Séguin. She is patron of the National Girls' Choir of Scotland and in 2018 was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. In 2023 she sang in the National Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication for King Charles III following his coronation.

Dario Acosta



Baritone **Brian Mulligan** (Kurwenal) makes his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances. Equally renowned as an interpreter of classic works by Wagner and Strauss as well as the most challenging 20th- and 21st-century operas, his stage portrayals have taken him to opera houses throughout Europe and North America. He also makes regular appearances with the leading American orchestras and in recital. He began his 2024–25 season in the title role of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* at the Concertgebouw with

Jaap van Zweden and the Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. He returned to the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Don Pizarro in Beethoven's *Fidelio* and made his role debut as the Wanderer in Wagner's *Siegfried* with the Hangzhou Philharmonic and Markus Stenz. Other recent performance highlights include Wotan in Wagner's *Die Walküre* with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Rotterdam Philharmonic. A graduate of the Juilliard School, Mr. Mulligan was awarded a Richard Tucker Career Grant, a Sara Tucker Study Grant, and the George London Award. He has recorded for Deutsche Grammophon, Naxos, and Warner. He holds dual citizenship in the United States and Ireland.

Cast

Marco Borggreve



Bass **Tareq Nazmi** (King Marke), who is making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut, also sings the role of King Marke in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* at the Grand Théâtre de Genève this season. Other highlights of the 2024–25 season include Oroveso in Bellini's *Norma* at the Theater an der Wien; a house and role debut as Gremin in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* at the Dresden Semperoper; a return as Gurnemanz in Wagner's *Parsifal* at the Tokyo Spring Festival; Verdi's Requiem with the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale

di Santa Cecilia under the direction of Daniel Harding; and Pater Profundus in Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the Vienna Symphony under Philippe Jordan. Mr. Nazmi's concert repertoire spans works from Bach to Beethoven, Haydn to Brahms, and Mozart to Dvořák and Mahler. As a lieder singer he recently performed with pianist Gerold Huber at the Schubertiade Hohenems, in Munich and Cologne, and at London's Wigmore Hall. In 2023 he performed Schubert's *Winterreise* at the Tokyo Spring Festival. Mr. Nazmi began his career at the Opera Studio of the Bavarian State Opera, where he was a member of the Munich ensemble until 2016.

Daniel Welch



Tenor **Freddie Ballentine** (Melot) makes his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances. Hailing from Norfolk, Virginia, the GRAMMY Award winner was the 2021 recipient of the Kennedy Center's Marian Anderson Award and is an alumnus of both the Cafritz Young Artists of Washington National Opera and the Los Angeles Opera's Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program. Highlights of the 2024–25 season include debuts with the New World Symphony and the Austin, Utah, and Detroit operas.

He returns to Dutch National Opera for the world premiere of Philip Venables's *We Are the Lucky Ones*, gives recitals with pianist Kunal Lahiry at the Konzerthaus Berlin and Seattle Opera, and appears in concert with the Pacific Vocal Series in California. Notable engagements at the Metropolitan Opera in the 2023–24 season included Remendado in Carrie Cracknell's new production of Bizet's *Carmen* and Tybalt in Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Next season he returns to the Met as Sportin' Life in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and makes his Bavarian State Opera debut as the Third Jew in Strauss's *Salome*.

Cast



Korean tenor **Jonghyun Park** (A Sailor's Voice/A Shepherd), who is making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut, returned this season to the Metropolitan Opera for his second year in the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, where he sang the First Prisoner and covered Jaquino in Beethoven's *Fidelio* and appeared as the Sergeant in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. He made his Met debut last season as the First Guard in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and covered the role of Tybalt in Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*. Recent engagements include

Fenton in Verdi's *Falstaff* at Opera San José, covering Fenton at Palm Beach Opera, covering Tamino in *The Magic Flute* as part of the Merola Opera Program's Schwabacher Summer Concert Series, and Nemorino in Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* with Yale Opera. On the concert stage, he has performed in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the New Choral Society, Handel's *Messiah* with the Brandford Chamber Orchestra, and Mozart's Requiem with the Waterbury Symphony. He is the recipient of the Fritz Wunderlich Award from the 2024 Opera Index Vocal Competition and holds degrees in voice from Seoul National and Yale universities.



Originally from Terre Haute, Indiana, American baritone **Nathan Schludecker** (A Steersman) received his Bachelor of Music degree at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) in 2023 and is now pursuing his master's degree at the Curtis Institute of Music. At CCM he performed the roles of Papageno in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and the title role of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* for the undergraduate opera department, Opera D'arte. At the Curtis Institute of Music he has sung in a staged version of Handel's *L'Allegro, il*

Penseroso, ed il Moderato; the Director in Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*; and the Forester in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*. This season he sings the Count in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Maximillian in Bernstein's *Candide*. He has performed with Opera in the Ozarks, the Chautauqua Institution, and the International Summer Opera Festival of Morelia. This past summer he returned to Opera in the Ozarks to perform Giorgio Germont in Verdi's *La traviata* and John Proctor in Robert Ward's *The Crucible*. These current performances mark his Philadelphia Orchestra debut.

Stage Director/Choir

Marcus Shields



Dylan Evans is a stage director at the Metropolitan Opera. Recent projects there included Strauss's *Salome*, production by Claus Guth; Beethoven's *Fidelio*; and Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Upcoming productions include Strauss's *Arabella* and Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, production by Yuval Sharon. Mr. Evans created several productions for Chicago Opera Theater (Szymanowski's *King Roger*, Rachmaninoff's *Aleko*, and Jalbot's *Everest*) and Opera Memphis (Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* and Suppé's *The Beautiful Galatea*). He studied music performance and German literature at

the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music in Appleton, Wisconsin, and currently lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Jessica Griffin



The **Philadelphia Symphonic Choir** made its Philadelphia Orchestra debut in December 2016. Consisting of talented vocalists auditioned from around the country, the ensemble was created to marry gifted and unique voices of Philadelphia and beyond with the legendary Philadelphia Sound.

Performance highlights with the Orchestra include the world premiere of the concert version of Kevin Puts's opera *The Hours* and Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* in Philadelphia and at Carnegie Hall. The Choir is directed by Donald Palumbo,

who recently stepped down as chorus master of the Metropolitan Opera, where he was responsible for the chorus's preparation and performance in more than 25 productions over 17 seasons. He was also the first American to hold the position of chorus director of the Salzburg Festival where, in 2000, he prepared the chorus for performances of the Schumann Requiem with the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch. The American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO, the union of professional singers, dancers, and production personnel in opera, ballet, and concert, represents the choral artists in these performances.

The Philadelphia Symphonic Choir

Tenors

Aldo A. Aranzulla
Sam Barge
Noah Donahue
Roberto Guevara, Jr.
Jonathan Hartwell
Bryan Umberto Hoyos
Colin Kase
Jordan Klotz
Joshua Lisner
Max Marques
DonLeroy Morales
Timothy Morrow
Jacob Nelson
Nicholas Petroski
Andrew Skitko
Steven Soph
Royce Strider
Daniel Taylor
Tyler Wert
Carson Zajdel

Basses

Greg Boatman
Christopher D. Aldrich
Gordon Blodgett
Michael Carson
Kyle Chastulik
Peter Christian
Roy DeMarco
Connor Fluharty
Loren Greer
Gabriel Harley
Gabriel Lukijaniuk
Bryan McClary
Jonathan Mortensen
Luis Orrego
Carlos Pedroza
Erik Potteiger
John T.K. Scherch
Andrew J. Shaw
Sergey Tkachenko
Jackson Williams

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