

77TH SEASON OF

CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART | JANUARY 6, 2019



PROGRAM

New York Opera Society

Daniel Beckwith, music direction

The Evolution of Fools: From Jesters to Buffoons

Presented in celebration of *Sense of Humor*

January 6, 2019 | 3:30

West Building, West Garden Court

Alisa Jordheim, soprano

Gustavo Ahualli, baritone

Augusta Caso, mezzo-soprano

Dominic Armstrong, tenor

Carlos Feliciano, tenor

Alex Wang, tenor

Daniel Alexander, bass

Jackie Wolborsky, violin I

Bruno Pena, violin II

Matthew Maffett, viola

Christine Lightner, cello

Michael Rittling, bass

Adele Demi, clarinet

Suzanne Jordheim, flute

Caitlin Rain, costume design

Marc Verzatt, stage direction

Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857–1919), composer and libretto

Pagliacci

Act I/Finale, Aria: “Vesti la giubba”

Canio: Dominic Armstrong

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901), composer

Arrigo Boito (1842–1918), libretto

Falstaff

Act I/Scene I

Falstaff: Gustavo Ahualli

Bardolph: Carlos Feliciano

Dr. Caius: Alex Wang

Pistola: Daniel Alexander

Act II/Scene I, Aria: “Siam pentiti”

Falstaff: Gustavo Ahualli

Bardolph: Carlos Feliciano

Pistola: Daniel Alexander

Dame Quickly: Augusta Caso

Giuseppe Verdi, composer

Francesco Maria Piave (1810–1876), libretto

Rigoletto

Act II/Scene: Mio Padre, Aria: “Cortigiani”

Gilda: Alisa Jordheim

Rigoletto: Gustavo Ahualli

Borsa: Carlos Feliciano

Merullo: Alex Wang

Usciere: Carlos Feliciano

Monterone: Daniel Alexander

Act III/Scene I

Gilda: Alisa Jordheim

Rigoletto: Gustavo Ahualli

Duke: Dominic Armstrong

Sparafucile: Daniel Alexander

Maddalena: Augusta Caso

THE ARTISTS

The New York Opera Society (NYOS) develops new audiences for opera by commissioning, creating, and funding distinctive and high-quality productions. To that end, NYOS serves as a conduit to the public by disseminating important messages, musical inspiration, and seminal artistic performances via partnerships with major performance venues, corporations, nonprofits, and governments to present the work of our artists in the United States and abroad.

Last season, NYOS debuted its commission *Upon This Handful of Earth* (Gisle Kverndokk/Aksel-Otto Bull) with Sacred Music in a Sacred Space at St. Ignatius Loyola in New York City; performed excerpts of *Letters from Ruth* (Kverndokk/Bull) at the National Gallery of Art; and premiered its new commission *Tres Sombreros de Copa/Three Top Hats* at Teatro Sergio Cardoso in São Paulo, Brazil.

NYOS annually tours new productions internationally and presents a contemporary opera or new commission in the United States. It also hosts a salon series and oversees an international artist-in-residence program and substantive outreach programs. Recent highlights include productions of *Falstaff* and *Madama Butterfly* for its annual festival in Southern France; premieres at the Lincoln Center and Teatro São Pedro, São Paulo, Brazil, of its contemporary Spanish opera, *Las Horas Vacías*, by Ricardo Llorca; and three tours and a world premiere of the NYOS's commission of *Max and Moritz: A Cartoon Opera in Seven Pranks*, by Gisle Kverndokk. Other notable NYOS evenings have taken place at the Chicago Cultural Center, the Embassy of Italy, New York's World Financial Center, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, and the United Nations, and at numerous European and South American embassies and consulates.

NYOS has recently been favorably reviewed on PBS and in the *Washington Post*, *Time*, *GQ*, *Opera News*, *El País*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. NYOS is led by Executive Director Jennifer Cho and a dedicated board of directors chaired by philanthropist Lesley Silvester.

Daniel Beckwith has conducted in many of North America and Europe's major opera houses. With a repertoire that spans the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries, he has been hailed as one of the most exciting conductors of his generation. His debut with both the Metropolitan Opera and the San Francisco Opera was *Don Giovanni*. His debut opera with the Lyric Opera of Chicago was *Così fan Tutte*. He has also collaborated with the New York City, Seattle, Arizona, Cleveland, Portland, Florida Grand, and Washington National Operas. In Canada, Beckwith has conducted for the Canadian Opera Company, as well as the companies of Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver. His international credits include England's Glyndebourne Festival and Switzerland's Grand Theatre of Geneva.

Beckwith has been heard on the concert stage with Renée Fleming, Benita Valente, Carol Vaness, Nancy Gustafson, Marilyn Horne, Frederica von Stade, Jennifer Larmore, Denyce Graves, Susanne Mentzer, Nathan Gunn, and Samuel Ramey. His television credits (with Ms. Fleming) include *Good Morning America*, *The View*, and *Martha Stewart Living*.

Alisa Jordheim, soprano, has been lauded by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as “vocally resplendent,” possessing “impeccable coloratura.” This season, she makes her role and company debut as Gilda in *Rigoletto* with the San Diego Opera. She also sings Mozart's *Exultate Jubilate* with the Milwaukee Symphony, Mozart's Mass in C Minor with the Bel Canto Chorus, as well as various concerts with the New Philharmonic and the New York Opera Society.

Highlights from past seasons include performances with the Paris, Florentine, Atlanta, Cincinnati, and Boston Midsummer Operas, the Caramoor International Music Festival, the Columbus Symphony, the New York Opera Society, the Ensemble Pygmalion at Versailles, the Baltimore Symphony, the Grant Park Music Festival, and the Las Vegas Philharmonic.

Jordheim is the 2016 Rose Bampton Award winner and the 2015 grant recipient from the William Matheus Sullivan Musical Foundation. A graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, she has received many awards and honors, including an American Scandinavian Foundation Fellowship and a U.S. Student Fulbright Foundation Travel Grant.

Gustavo Ahualli, baritone, has been hailed for his rich and powerful voice and is well-known for his dramatic portrayals of leading roles in both the standard operatic repertoire, as well as new works by contemporary composers. The *Houston Press* wrote, “As Macbeth, Argentinean baritone, Gustavo Ahualli, proved he has an ideal voice for Verdi, beautiful, full, rich, and powerful. His singing was effortless, with excellent control, and ripe with machismo.”

Ahualli has sung at worldwide venues, including Argentina's Teatro Argentino de la Plata, Teatro Colon, and Teatro Avenida, Peru's Teatro Segura, Italy's Teatro Lauro Rossi, and New York's Carnegie Hall and St. Patrick's Cathedral. An avid recitalist, Ahualli champions the Argentinean, Latin American, French, and Italian art song repertoire. He currently lives in Washington, DC, and serves on the voice faculty at the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music at The Catholic University of America.

Augusta Caso, mezzo-soprano, has been hailed by the *LA Times* as “mysteriously smoldering...a name to remember,” and by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* as a “silken...beguiling mezzo” with “fine subtle acting.” This past season, Caso made her Metropolitan Opera debut as a Flowermaiden in Wagner's *Parsifal*, and her Los Angeles Opera debut in Getty's *Canterville Ghost* as First Otis Twin. Recently, she sang the title role in *Carmen* with New York Opera Collaborative. Her future projects include the

title role in Laura Schwendinger's *Artemisia* with Center for Contemporary Opera, and a new creation about Marilyn Monroe by JacobTV at National Sawdust called *Able to Be/Harper Songs*. Caso returns to Amsterdam to reprise *Anais Nin* for this year's celebration of Louis Andriessen's eightieth birthday.

Dominic Armstrong, tenor, has quickly established himself internationally as an artist of superb and distinguished musicality and characterization. A winner of the 2013 George London Foundation Vocal Competition and a Grand Finalist in the 2008 National Council Auditions with the Metropolitan Opera, he holds degrees from Truman State University, the Juilliard School, and the Curtis Institute.

This season Armstrong performs the role of Macduff in Verdi's *Macbeth* with the Syracuse Opera. He also appears with the Florida Orchestra for Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, the Kaohsiung Symphony for a New Year's concert, and the Portland Symphony for Rachmaninoff's *The Bells*. Last season, Armstrong performed in a concert tour of Russia under the baton of Mark Mandarano, in celebration of Leonard Bernstein. He also joined Curtis on Tour for their annual touring initiative and the Milwaukee Symphony for Bach's *Magnificat*. He appeared with both the Los Angeles Opera and the Center for Contemporary Opera in a double billing of two Gordon Getty one-act operas, *Usher House* and *The Canterville Ghost*, playing Edgar Allen Poe and Duke Cecil of Yorkshire.

Carlos Feliciano, tenor, is a native of Puerto Rico. He fell in love with opera at the age of eleven, when he sang the boy's solo in the children's chorus of *La bohème* with Opera de Puerto Rico, sharing the stage with opera greats that included Pablo Elvira and Mirella Freni.

DC Metro Arts wrote that Feliciano's "direct and clear tenor voice is the perfect vehicle of his 'leading romantic man' persona." A proponent of new music, Feliciano was heard in New York Opera Society's *Supersize Girl* and *Max und Moritz*, by Gisle Kvendokk. He served as understudy for the main tenor role in the world premiere of *El Pasado Nunca se Termina*, touring at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the San Diego Opera. Some of his credits include Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Il Duca di Mantova in *Rigoletto*, Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, as well as solo concert performances with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Oslo Symphony, and the Erie Philharmonic, among others.

Feliciano has received numerous awards, notably first place at the Five Towns Music and Arts Foundation Vocal Competition, and several grants and scholarships, including from the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council, the Juilliard School, and the Manhattan School of Music. He received his bachelor's degree in voice performance from the Manhattan School of Music and his master of music degree in voice performance and pedagogy from Penn State University.

Alex Wang, tenor, is a versatile singer with a varied repertoire. His operatic roles have included Roderigo in Verdi's *Otello* and Le Remandado in Bizet's *Carmen*, both with One World Symphony in New York City, and Dr. Caius in Verdi's *Falstaff* with the New York Opera Society, which he is pleased to reprise for this afternoon's performance.

An accomplished concert soloist, he has sung Bach's *Magnificat*, Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Brahms's *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, Bob Chilcott's *Requiem*, and Arvo Pärt's *Passio*, among others. His eclectic performance history includes roles with the American Ballet Theatre, the Mark Morris Dance Group, and Dance Brazil; a broadcast of NPR's *Prairie Home Companion* from New York's Town Hall; and televised performances singing backup for Celine Dion and Aretha Franklin. He can be heard on composer Tania León's CD *In Motion*, which received a Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Classical Composition.

Daniel Alexander, bass, has shared the stage with artists who vary from Dave Brubeck, Audra McDonald, and Bryn Terfel, to Danny Elfman, Marion Cotillard, and Hugh Jackman. In New York City, he has appeared as a soloist at the Lincoln Center Festival and with One World Symphony, the Desoff Choirs, the Saint Andrew Chorale, the Cornerstone Chorale, and the Long Island Pops. Recently, he sang with the vocal ensemble AViva Voce at the San Miguel de Allende Early Music Festival, as well as in Oaxaca and Mexico City in a radio broadcast concert.

Alexander has performed in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem with the Israel Philharmonic and has sung with the New York Philharmonic, New York City Opera, Chicago Symphony, and Los Angeles Philharmonic. He was featured in the New York premiere of Joby Talbot's *Path of Miracles*, broadcast on WNYC, and he appeared in premieres of Sir Paul McCartney's oratorio *Ecce Cor Meum* at Carnegie Hall and Julie Taymor's production of the opera *Grendel*. Alexander can be heard on the Grammy-winning CD *On the Transmigration of Souls* by John Adams with the New York Philharmonic. He holds a bachelor's degree in science and master's degree in music from Indiana University, with postgraduate study at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

In past seasons, Caso performed at the Center for Contemporary Opera, the Spoleto Festival USA, and Amsterdam's Musiekgebouw aan 't IJ, where she earned a Schaunard award nomination. She sang prominent roles with Opera North, Resonanz Opera, Sarasota Opera, and Divaria Productions, and appeared as a concert soloist with the Ars Musica Chorale (New Jersey) and the Reading Choral Society (Pennsylvania). Caso earned a bachelor of arts degree from Williams College, a master of music degree from the University of Oklahoma, and an opera fellowship at the Weitzenhoffer College of Fine Arts.

Caitlin Rain is a costume designer from Dallas, Texas. This is her fourth collaboration with NYOS, following *Upon This Handful of Earth*, *Letters from Ruth* and *The Three Lives of Rosina Almaviva*. Previous design projects include *Coriolanus* (Stella Adler Studios), *Awake and Sing!* (Olney Theatre Center), and *The Bomb-itty of Errors* (Second Thought Theatre). Her assistant/associate design work includes productions with the American Ballet Theatre, the Santa Fe Opera, the Saito Kinen Festival, the Boston Ballet, and numerous regional theaters. She has a master of fine arts degree from Southern Methodist University.

Marc Verzatt maintains an active career directing opera, operetta, and musical theater throughout the United States, South America, and Europe, and is an acting teacher and coach in the voice department at the Mannes School of Music.

Verzatt began his theatrical career as a dancer with the Metropolitan Opera after studying drama at Rutgers University and ballet with New Jersey's Garden State Ballet. After several seasons as a soloist with the MET Ballet, he left to continue his education in production as a stage manager with the Cincinnati Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. He made his professional directing debut with a production of Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with Opera Columbus. He has since directed opera for the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Florida Grand Opera, and several companies nationwide. In 2005, he returned to the Metropolitan Opera stage for a speaking role in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*. In 2006, he was named Outstanding Stage Director of the Year by *Classical Singer Magazine*. In demand as an acting and movement teacher, he has taught and directed at young artists' programs in California, Brazil, and Sweden. This season takes him to New York City's Blue Hill Troupe for *The Gondoliers* and to Italy's Perugia Music Festival.

PROGRAM NOTE

Our modern-day preoccupation with reality entertainment was foretold by grand opera long before the advent of television and media sensationalism.

Jesters and their antics reveled in ancient civilizations and formed the cornerstone of entertainment; they alleviated cares and could verbally win a battle of wits against any opponent. This concert explores how jesters evolved from folkloric objects of levity, to those "wise enough to play the fool" (Shakespeare), and ultimately to the buffoon who provides amusement through inappropriate appearance and behavior.

Ruggero Leoncavallo and Giuseppe Verdi presciently experimented with every facet of laughter, satire, and tragedy related to the fool's transformation from the court, to the stage, to modern times.

New York Opera Society concurrently celebrates the National Gallery of Art's exhibition *Sense of Humor* with this concert of excerpts from the masterworks *Pagliacci* (Leoncavallo), *Falstaff* (Verdi), and *Rigoletto* (Verdi), along with original observations by renowned opera director Marc Verzatt.

TRANSLATIONS AND SYNOPSES

Pagliacci Act I/Finale, Aria: “Vesti la giubba”

In the first act’s finale of Ruggiero Leoncavallo’s unforgettable two-act opera, *Pagliacci*, Canio, a clown and leader of a traveling theater troupe, hears that his wife is having an affair. Despite the aloof and foolish roles he plays as an actor, Canio is a serious person and highly protective of his wife. Following a performance, he and a few cast members go out for a celebratory drink. Canio’s wife, Nedda, stays behind with another cast member, Tonio, and someone starts a joke that she stayed behind in order to be seduced by him. Canio becomes furious and rebukes his friends for their slanderous fun. He believes his wife is faithful and won’t hear otherwise. Meanwhile, as Canio drinks with Beppe, Tonio does try to seduce Nedda, but she rejects him and sends him away. But he he hides instead. Moments later, Silvio, Nedda’s lover, arrives and convinces her to elope with him. Tonio runs to the tavern to tell Canio, who then rushes back to Nedda, just missing her lover. He demands that she reveal her lover’s identity, but she refuses. Beppe talks Canio out of harming his wife and insists that they prepare for the next performance. As Canio gets into costume, he sings the heart-wrenching aria “Vesti la giubba.”

Act! While I’m going mad,
I don’t know what I’m saying anymore,
Or what I’m doing!
Yet I must, force yourself!
Bah! Might you be a man?
You are Pagliaccio!

Put on the jacket,
And the powdered face.
The people pay, and they want to laugh here.
And if the harlequin flies to you Colombina,
Laugh, Pagliaccio, and everyone will applaud!
Transform the spasms and the crying into jokes
The hiccups and the pain into a smirk, Ah!

Laugh, Pagliaccio,
At your shattered love!
Laugh at the sorrow that poisons your heart!

Falstaff, Act I/Scene I

Sir John Falstaff, an old, dissolute knight from Windsor, sits in the Garter Inn with his “partners in crime,” Bardolfo and Pistola. As they enjoy their drinks, Dr. Caius interrupts the men and accuses Falstaff of robbing his house. Falstaff is able to redirect Dr. Caius’s anger so that he soon leaves. Falstaff scolds Bardolfo and Pistola for being inept thieves. He soon comes upon a new scheme to acquire money—he’ll woo two wealthy matrons (Alice Ford and Meg Page) and take advantage of their husbands’ wealth. He writes each lady a love letter and instructs his partners to deliver them, but they refuse, claiming it is not honorable to do such a thing. Hearing their hypocrisy, Falstaff kicks them out of the inn and finds a page to deliver the letters.

CAIUS: Falstaff!

FALSTAFF: Ho, there!

CAIUS: Sir John Falstaff!

BARDOLPH: Oh, what’s come over you?

CAIUS: You beat my servants!

FALSTAFF: Host! Another bottle of sherry!

CAIUS: You broke down my bay mare, you violated my house.

FALSTAFF: But not your housekeeper.

CAIUS: Oh, thank you! A blear-eyed old hag. Ample Sir, were you twenty times Sir John Falstaff, Knight, I should force you to answer me.

FALSTAFF: This is my answer: I did everything you say.

CAIUS: And so?

FALSTAFF: I did it purposely.

CAIUS: I shall appeal to the King’s Council.

FALSTAFF: And God be with you. My counsel is this: be quiet or you’ll make an ass of yourself.

CAIUS: I haven’t finished!

FALSTAFF: Oh, the devil!

CAIUS: Bardolph!

BARDOLPH: Doctor!

CAIUS: Last night you got me drunk.

BARDOLPH: Too bad! What a pain! (letting the Doctor feel his pulse) I am ill. Make me a prognostic. My gut is ruined. Cursed by hosts who chalk their wine! You see this meteor?

CAIUS: I do.

BARDOLPH: It goes to bed ablaze like this each night.

CAIUS: Prognostic be damned! You made me drink, you rascal, with him (indicating Pistola)...talking nonsense. Then, when I was drunk, you emptied my pockets.

BARDOLPH: Not I.

CAIUS: Who, then?

FALSTAFF: Pistola!

PISTOLA: Sir!

FALSTAFF: Did you empty this gentleman's pockets?

CAIUS: Of course it was he. Look—he's about to deny it, the lying scoundrel! Here I had two shillings of King Edward's realm, and six half-crowns. There's not a sign of them now.

PISTOLA: Sir, I ask leave to fight him with this wooden weapon.
(to the Doctor) You lie!

CAIUS: Clodhopper! You're speaking to a gentleman!

PISTOLA: Simpleton!

CAIUS: Beggar!

PISTOLA: Beast!

CAIUS: Dog!

PISTOLA: Coward!

CAIUS: Scarecrow!

PISTOLA: Gnome!

CAIUS: Mandrake spawn!

PISTOLA: Who?

CAIUS: You.

PISTOLA: Say it again!

CAIUS: Yes!

PISTOLA: By thunder!

FALSTAFF: Eh, Pistola! Don't go off here! Bardolph! Now, who emptied this gentleman's pockets?

CAIUS: It was one of them!

BARDOLPH: He drinks; then, having drunk too much, he loses his senses. Later he comes up with some wild tale he's dreamed while asleep under the table.

FALSTAFF: You hear? If only you think, you'll find the truth. The charge is refuted. Go now in peace.

CAIUS: If ever I get drunk again at the inn, I swear it will be only with honest, sober, civil, pious folk.

BARDOLPH, PISTOLA: Amen.

FALSTAFF: Enough of this antiphon. You are out of time. This is the basic rule of art: steal deftly and at the right time. You are clumsy artists.

BARDOLPH, PISTOLA: A...

FALSTAFF: Six chickens: six shillings. Thirty bottles of sherry: two pounds. Three turkeys...(to Bardolph, throwing him his purse) Look in my purse. Two pheasants. An anchovy...

BARDOLPH: One mark—one mark—one penny.

FALSTAFF: Search!

BARDOLPH: I have!

FALSTAFF: Search!

BARDOLPH: There's not a penny more.

FALSTAFF: You're my ruin! Each week I spend ten guineas! Drunkard! True, as we go from tavern to tavern at night, your blazing nose serves well as a lantern. But what I save in oil, you drink in wine. I've been watering that purple mushroom for thirty years! You cost too much. (to Pistola) And you too. Host! Another bottle! You make me lose weight! If Falstaff thins, he's not himself, no one will love him; in this paunch a thousand tongues cry out my name!

PISTOLA: Immense Falstaff!

BARDOLPH: Enormous Falstaff!

FALSTAFF: (patting it) This is my kingdom. I must increase it.

BARDOLPH: Enormous Falstaff!

PISTOLA: Immense Falstaff!

FALSTAFF: But now we must sharpen our wits.

BARDOLPH, PISTOLA: Let's sharpen away.

FALSTAFF: Do you know a fellow here in town named Ford?

BARDOLPH: Yes.

PISTOLA: Yes.

FALSTAFF: He's a rich townsman...

PISTOLA: More generous than Croesus.

BARDOLPH: A lord!

FALSTAFF: His wife is beautiful.

PISTOLA: And she holds the purse strings.

FALSTAFF: That's the one! Oh love! Starry eyes! A swan's neck! Her lips? A flower! A laughing flower. Her name is Alice. One day as I passed by in her neighborhood, she smiled. Love's fire flamed in my heart. The goddess shone a burning-glass on me, on me, on my lusty flanks, my broad chest, my manly foot, my sturdy, upright, mighty frame! Desire blazed within her as I passed, as if she would say: I am Sir John Falstaff's!

BARDOLPH: Full stop.

FALSTAFF: And paragraph. There is still another...

BARDOLPH, then PISTOLA: Another?!

FALSTAFF:...named Margaret.

PISTOLA: They call her Meg.

FALSTAFF: She too is taken with my charms. She too holds the keys to the coffer. These two shall be my Golconda, my Gold Coast! Look at me. I'm still enjoying a pleasant Indian summer. Take these two fiery letters. (He gives Bardolph one of the letters from the table.) Take this to Meg; let us test her virtue. Your nose flames with zeal. (He gives Pistola the other letter.) And you, take this to Alice.

PISTOLA: I carry a sword. I am no Pandarus. I refuse.

FALSTAFF: Charlatan!

BARDOLPH: Sir John, I cannot serve you in this plot. It is forbidden by...

FALSTAFF: By whom?

BARDOLPH: My honor.

FALSTAFF: Eh, page! (to Bardolph and Pistola) Go hang, but no more on me. (to the page) Take these letters, for two ladies, carry them immediately—go, run along! (returning to Bardolph and Pistola) Honor! Thieves! You are faithful to your honor, you sewers of infamy, when not always can even we keep faith with ours. Yes, even I myself, must sometimes lay aside the fear of God and, of necessity, outwit my honor with some stratagem, some ambiguity, the better to tack with deftness; and you, in your rags, with your crooked leopard's eye, your fetid laughter, keep company with Honor! What honor? What honor indeed? Such chatter! What a joke! Can honor fill your belly? No. Can honor set a broken shin? It cannot. Or mend a foot? No. Or a finger? No. Or a hair? No. Honor is not a surgeon. What is it, then? A word. What's in this word? Air, which flies away. A fine concept! Does a dead man know honor? No. Does it live, then, only with the living? Not even, for it puffs up at flattery, pride corrupts it, slander softens it. For me, I'll have no part of it! No, no, no, no, no, no! But to get back to you two bandits. I've been patient too long, and now I throw you out. Ho, there! Quick, quick! At the gallop! At the gallop! The halter fits you well. Out, get out of here! Thieves! Thieves! Out of here!

Falstaff, Act II/Scene I, Aria: "Siam pentiti"

Back in the Garter Inn, Bardolph and Pistola (secretly employed by Mr. Ford) beg for Falstaff's forgiveness. They announce the arrival of Dame Quickly. She tells Falstaff that the two women have accepted his letters without knowing he has sent the same letter to them both. Dame Quickly says that Alice, in fact, has arranged a meeting between two and three o'clock that very day. Ecstatic, Falstaff begins to clean himself up. Soon after, Bardolph and Pistola introduce a disguised Mr. Ford to Falstaff, who tells Falstaff of his burning desire for Alice. Falstaff states that he has already won Alice for himself and has a meeting with her later that day. Mr. Ford becomes furious and leaves the inn—he is unaware of his wife's plan to foil Falstaff and believes her to be cheating on him.

BARDOLPH, PISTOLA: We are penitent and contrite.

FALSTAFF: Man returns to his vice like a cat to cream.

PISTOLA: And we return to you.

BARDOLPH: Master, a woman outside asks to be admitted to your presence.

FALSTAFF: Let her in.

QUICKLY: Your Grace!

FALSTAFF: Good day, my good woman.

QUICKLY: Your Grace! If it please your grace, I should like a word with you, alone.

FALSTAFF: I grant you audience. (to Bardolph and Pistola) Away with you.

QUICKLY: Yours Grace! Mistress Alice Ford...

FALSTAFF: Ah!... Well?

QUICKLY: Alas! Poor woman! You are a great seducer!

FALSTAFF: I know. Continue.

QUICKLY: Alice is quite upset for love of you. She sends word that she's got your letter, she thanks you, and her husband is always out from two o'clock until three.

FALSTAFF: From two o'clock until three.

QUICKLY: At that time, your Grace can freely go to lovely Alice's house. Poor woman! Her suffering is most cruel! She has a jealous husband!

FALSTAFF: From two o'clock until three. Tell her that I await the hour with impatience. I shall not be wanting in my duty.

QUICKLY: Well said. But I have still another message for your Grace.

FALSTAFF: Speak.

QUICKLY: The lovely Meg (an angel; to see her is to love her), she too greets you warmly; she says her husband's rarely absent. Poor thing! A lily of truth, of faith! You bewitch them all.

FALSTAFF: There's no witchery—just a certain personal fascination. Tell me, the other one knows of this other?

QUICKLY: Imagine! Women are born deceivers. Fear not.

FALSTAFF: Let me give you something...

QUICKLY: He who sows favors, reaps love.

FALSTAFF: Take this, Dame Mercury. My greetings to the two ladies.

QUICKLY: Your Grace.

Rigoletto, Act II/Scene: Mio Padre, Aria: "Cortigiani"

The courtiers describe their abduction of Gilda to the Duke. He is delighted to discover that she has been brought to his palace and awaits him in his bedroom. Rigoletto now enters, feigning indifference but desperately seeking signs of the whereabouts of his daughter. When he realizes what has happened, he curses, but then pleads with the courtiers for her return, without success. Gilda appears en déshabillé, and Rigoletto swears vengeance on the Duke.

RIGOLETTO: Courtiers, vile, damnable rabble,
how much were you paid for my treasure?
There's nothing you won't do for money,
but my daughter is beyond any price.
Give her back...or this hand, though
unarmed, will prove a dread weapon indeed.
A man will fear nothing on earth
when defending his children's honor.
Assassins, open that door!

The door, the door, assassins, open it.
Ah! You're all against me!
All against me!

Then I'll weep. Marullo, my lord,
you whose soul is as gentle as your heart,
tell me, where have they hidden her?
Marullo, my lord, tell me, where have they hidden her?
She's in there...isn't she?
Isn't that so?...in there?...isn't that so?
You don't answer...alas!
My lords, forgive me, have pity!
Give an old man back his daughter!
To give her back can cost you nothing now,
but to me my daughter is everything.
Lords, forgive me...

GILDA: Father!

RIGOLETTO: Oh, God! My Gilda! Sirs, she is all the family I have.

Don't be afraid now, my angel child...

(to the courtiers) It was only a joke, wasn't it? I, though I wept before, now laugh.

(to Gilda) Why do you still weep?

GILDA: The shame, father!

RIGOLETTO: Good God! What do you mean?

GILDA: To you alone I confess...

RIGOLETTO: (to the courtiers) Off with you, all of you! And if your Duke should dare approach, tell him not to enter, tell him I am here.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS: With children and with madmen, pretense is often best. We'll leave, but still keep watch to see what he may do.

RIGOLETTO: Speak...we are alone.

GILDA: (to herself) O Heaven, give me courage!

(to Rigoletto) Each holy day, in church, as I prayed to God, a fatally handsome young man stood where I could see him. Though our lips were silent, our hearts spoke through our eyes. Furtively, only last night he came to meet me for the first time. "I am a student and poor," he said so tenderly, and with passionate fervor told me of his love. He went...my heart was rapt in the sweetest dreams, when suddenly the men broke in who carried me away; they brought me here by force, cruelly afraid.

RIGOLETTO: (to himself) Ah! I asked infamy, O God, only for myself, so that she might be raised as high as I had fallen. Ah, beside the gallows one must raise an altar! But all is now lost, the altar is cast down!

(to Gilda) Weep, my child, weep...

GILDA: Father!

RIGOLETTO: And let your tears fall upon my breast.

GILDA: Father, an angel speaks through you and consoles me...

RIGOLETTO: Weep, my child. When I have finished what I must do here, we can leave this house of doom.

GILDA: Yes.

RIGOLETTO: A single day has changed everything!

USHER: Open up: Monterone is to go to the dungeon.

MONTERONE: Since my curse has been in vain, and neither steel nor thunderbolt has struck your breast, you will live on, O Duke, in happiness.

RIGOLETTO: No, old man, you're wrong...you shall be avenged. Yes, revenge, terrible revenge is all that my heart desires. The hour of your punishment hastens on, that hour which will be your last. Like a thunderbolt from the hand of God, the jester's revenge shall strike you down.

GILDA: O my father, what a fierce joy flashes in your eyes!

RIGOLETTO: Revenge!

GILDA: Forgive him: and then we, too, may hear the voice of pardon from Heaven.

RIGOLETTO: Revenge!

GILDA: Forgive him!

RIGOLETTO: No!

GILDA: He betrayed me, yet I love him; great God, I ask for pity on this faithless man!

RIGOLETTO: Like a thunderbolt...

GILDA: Forgive him...

Rigoletto, Act III/Scene I

The Duke has been lured to a remote inn by Sparafucile's sister Maddalena. Rigoletto has paid Sparafucile to kill the Duke and to deliver his body in a sack, so that he himself can throw it into the Mincio River. Rigoletto brings Gilda with him to spy on the inn, hoping to reinforce the notion that the Duke is not a man of honor in affairs of the heart. Gilda is unimpressed. Rigoletto sends her home to change into men's clothing for their flight to Verona. Infatuated with the Duke herself, Maddalena begs her brother to spare the Duke and to murder the jester instead. His sense of professional responsibility offended, Sparafucile refuses, but does go so far as to agree that if anyone else should happen to show up at the inn on this wild and stormy night, he will murder him instead. Gilda, returning and hearing all this, sees her chance to help the man she loves. She boldly walks up to the door of the inn, knocks, is admitted and promptly stabbed and stuffed into the sack for Rigoletto. Later, Rigoletto is just about to throw the sack into the river when he hears the Duke still singing in the inn. Wildly he opens the sack to find his dying daughter, who with her last breath assures him that she will pray for him with her mother in heaven.

The scene is set at night near the River Mincio. Gilda and Rigoletto are standing on the road near a wine shop. The wall of the shop is so full of cracks and holes that whatever takes place within is clearly visible from the outside.

RIGOLETTO: And you love him?

GILDA: I love him.

RIGOLETTO: Poor woman's heart! Ah, the scoundrel! You shall be avenged, O Gilda.

GILDA: Have pity, my father!

RIGOLETTO: And if you were sure of his lack of faith, would you still love him?

GILDA: I do not know, but he adores me.

RIGOLETTO: He does?

GILDA: Yes.

RIGOLETTO: Well then, just watch.

GILDA: I see a man.

RIGOLETTO: Wait a moment.

GILDA: Ah, father!

DUKE: Two things and quickly...

SPARAFUCILE: What things?

DUKE: A room and a bottle of wine!

RIGOLETTO: These are the fellow's habits.

SPARAFUCILE: Oh, the gay blade!

DUKE: Women are as fickle
as feathers in the wind,
simple in speech,
and simple in mind.
always the loveable,
sweet, laughing face,
but laughing or crying,
the face is false for sure.

Women are as fickle...
If you rely on her
you will regret it,
and if you trust her
you are undone!
Yet none can call himself
fully contented
who has not tasted
love in her arms!
Women are as fickle...

SPARAFUCILE: Your man's in there. Is he to live or die?

RIGOLETTO: I'll come back later to conclude our business.

DUKE: One day, if I remember rightly, my pretty one, I met you...I asked someone about you and was told that you live here. Let me say that ever since, my heart has been yours alone.

GILDA: Deceiver!

MADDALENA: Ah! Ah! And of twenty others that maybe you're forgetting? I think my fine young man is a bit of a libertine.

DUKE: Yes, I'm a monster.

GILDA: Ah, father!

MADDALENA: Leave me alone, you scatterbrain!

DUKE: Ho, what a fuss!

MADDALENA: Behave yourself!

DUKE: Be nice to me. Don't play hard to get. Good behavior doesn't exclude jollity and love. Pretty white hand!

MADDALENA: You are joking, sir.

DUKE: No, no.

MADDALENA: I'm ugly.

DUKE: Kiss me.

GILDA: Deceiver!

MADDALENA: You're drunk!

DUKE: With love.

MADDALENA: My cynical friend, you like to joke, don't you?

DUKE: No, no. I want to marry you...

MADDALENA: I want your word of honor.

DUKE: Sweet little maid!

RIGOLETTO: Haven't you seen enough?

GILDA: The wicked deceiver!...

MADDALENA: I want your word of honor!...

DUKE: Sweet little maid!...

RIGOLETTO: Haven't you seen enough?...

DUKE: Fairest daughter of love, I am a slave to your charms; with but a single word you could relieve my every pain. Come, touch my breast and feel how my heart is racing. With but a single word...

MADDALENA: Ah! Ah! That really makes me laugh; talk like that is cheap enough...

GILDA: Ah, these are the loving words...

MADDALENA: Believe me, I know exactly what such playacting is worth!

GILDA: The scoundrel spoke once to me!

RIGOLETTO: Hush, weeping can do no good...

GILDA: O wretched heart betrayed, do not break for sorrow.

MADDALENA: I, my fine sir, am quite accustomed to foolish jokes like this, my fine sir!

DUKE: With but a single word you could relieve my every pain.

GILDA: O wretched heart betrayed, do not break for sorrow...

MADDALENA: Ah! Ah! That really makes me laugh; talk like that is cheap enough...

DUKE: Fairest daughter of love, I am a slave to your charms...

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Seventh Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, concerts are held in the West Building, West Garden Court.

Air Force Strings

The Latin American Spirit

A program commemorating Leonard Bernstein's famous *Young People's Concerts*.

January 13, 3:30

Krakauer-Tagg Duo

Breath and Hammer

January 20, 3:30

East Building Auditorium

Noah Getz and Friends

Sound Sketches

January 25, 12:10

East Building Mezzanine

Inscape Chamber Orchestra

Richard Scerbo, director

The Genius of Paul Hindemith

A program commemorating Leonard Bernstein's famous *Young People's Concerts*.

January 27, 3:30

General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

Concerts are made possible in part through the generosity of donors to the National Gallery of Art through The Circle. Reserved seating is available in recognition of their support. Please contact the development office at (202) 842-6450 or circle@nga.gov for more information.

The department of music produced these program notes. Copyright © 2019 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington

Cover Cornelis Dusart, *Cereris Bacchique Amicus (A Friend of Ceres and Bacchus)* (detail), 1695, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

[NGA.GOV/MUSIC](https://nga.gov/music)