



SAN FRANCISCO  
OPERA

## *Ernani*

### Cast Biographies



In 2014, **Russell Thomas** made his San Francisco Opera and role debuts as Pollione in *Norma*, a role he has since sung at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Canadian Opera Company, Los Angeles Opera, and the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia. He returned this season to take on the title role of *Roberto Devereux* for the first time.

Thomas has enjoyed several operatic triumphs in recent seasons, including Manrico in *Il Trovatore* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago; the title role of *Don Carlo* at Washington National Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin; Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at Los Angeles Opera and Los Angeles Philharmonic; Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at the Metropolitan Opera; the title role of *Otello* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and Tito in *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Salzburg Festival and Dutch National Opera. Past credits include Florestan in *Fidelio* at Cincinnati Opera; the title role of *Stiffelio* at Oper Frankfurt; Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at Deutsche Oper Berlin; Loge in *Das Rheingold* with the New York Philharmonic; Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; and Ismaele in *Nabucco* at the Metropolitan Opera and Seattle Opera.

Thomas has received prizes from the George London Foundation for Singers, the Liederkrantz Foundation, The Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation, the Richard Tucker Music Foundation, and the Francisco Viñas International Singing Contest. Future engagements include *Otello* with Canadian Opera Company and Deutsche Oper Berlin, Tito with Los Angeles Opera, and the title role of *Idomeneo* at Salzburg.



Garnering great acclaim as one of today's most promising Verdi sopranos, **Michelle Bradley** makes her San Francisco Opera and role debuts as Donna Elvira. A recent graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, Bradley is the 2017 recipient of the George London-Leonie Rysanek award from the George London Foundation, the 2016 recipient of the Hildegard Behrens Foundation Award, and a first-place winner in the Gerda Lissner Foundation and Serge & Olga Koussevitzky Young

Artist Awards vocal competitions.

This season she makes notable debuts in Frankfurt as Leonora in a new production of *La Forza del Destino*, in Nancy at the Opéra National de Lorraine for the title role in *Aida*, and with Deutsche Oper Berlin in staged performances of Verdi's Requiem. In concert, she will debut in Paris in Sir Michael Tippett's *A Child of our Time* with the Orchestre de Paris under Thomas Adès.

Her recent appearances include Clotilde in *Norma* at the Metropolitan Opera and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in Santiago de Chile. On the concert stage, she made her debut at Cincinnati's May Festival in Verdi's Requiem, performed a program of Chausson and Caplet chamber works with the New World Symphony and was featured in Carnegie Hall's Neighborhood Recital Series in honor of Marilyn Horne. Future projects include leading roles at the Metropolitan Opera; Lyric Opera of Chicago; Royal Opera, Covent Garden; and Vienna State Opera.



Italian baritone **Simone Piazzola** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Don Carlo in *Ernani*, a role he will perform next season in Menorca, Spain. His meteoric rise has taken him to the major opera houses throughout Italy including Venice's Teatro La Fenice and Teatro Vittorio Emanuele in Messina as Marcello in *La Bohème*; Teatro Massimo in Palermo as Cecil in *Maria Stuarda*; Verona and Florence as Germont in *La Traviata*; Cecil in *Maria Stuarda* and Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* in Venice, Beijing and Naples; Valentin in Gounod's *Faust* at the Teatro Bellini in Catania Marcello in Palermo conducted by Daniele Callegari; Germont in Jesi, Fermo, and Treviso; Paolo in *Simon Boccanegra* in Parma for the Verdi Festival and at Madrid's Teatro Real; and Sonora in *La Fanciulla del West* in Palermo.

His future engagements are *La Traviata* at London's Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Monte-Carlo, and *Falstaff*, *Don Carlo* and *Il Pirata* at Teatro Real in Madrid. Recent highlights include *La Traviata* at La Fenice, in Macerata, at Palau de les Arts in Valencia and in Los Angeles; *La Bohème* in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Tel Aviv, and Florence; *Il Trovatore* in Macerata, at Milan's Teatro alla Scala, Naples, and Budapest; *La Forza del Destino* in Valencia and Munich; *Simon Boccanegra* in Venice; *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Berlin and Munich; *Pagliacci* in Milan; *Aida* at the Vienna State Opera; and *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Rome. In August 2013 he won the Second Prize and Audience Award at the Plácido Domingo's Operalia Competition in Verona.



**Christian Van Horn** returns to San Francisco Opera for three upcoming role debuts—Zoroastro in *Orlando* (Summer 2019), John Claggart in *Billy Budd* (Fall 2019) and Don Ruy Gomez de Silva in *Ernani* (Summer 2020). The American bass-baritone made his Company debut in 2010 as the King of Egypt in *Aida* and has since appeared in fourteen roles including the Four Villains (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Orovoso (*Norma*), Timur (*Turandot*), Colline (*La*

*Bohème*), Count Horn (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), Narbal (*Les Troyens*), and Fedor von Bock in the world premiere of Marco Tutino's *Two Women*. A recipient of the 2018 Richard Tucker Award, this season Van Horn returns to the Metropolitan Opera for his titular role debut in *Mefistofele*, as well as productions of *La Bohème* (Colline) and *La Clemenza di Tito* (Publio). He also debuts at the Opéra National de Paris as Narbal and returns to the Bavarian State Opera as Escamillo (*Carmen*).

His many roles also include the title role in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mephistopheles in *Faust*, Enrico in *Anna Bolena*, Banquo in *Macbeth*, Zaccaria in *Nabucco*, and Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette*. He also appeared in the world premieres of Tan Dun's *Tea: A Mirror of the Soul* at the Santa Fe Opera and in the American premiere of Thomas Adés' *The Exterminating Angel* at the Metropolitan Opera.

In concert, he recently debuted with the Cleveland Orchestra in performances of Haydn's *The Creation* at Carnegie Hall. He has also appeared with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and the Berlin Philharmonic at the Salzburg Festival Easter Festival.

\* San Francisco Opera debut