



SAN FRANCISCO  
OPERA

## *La Bohème*

### Cast 2020 Biography



(Vallo della Lucania, Italy)

Italian Soprano **Maria Agresta** began her vocal studies at the Salerno Conservatory as a mezzo-soprano, later switching to soprano and studying with Raina Kabaivanska. After winning several international competitions she made her professional operatic debut in 2007. Engagements include Mimi and Micaëla (*Carmen*) for the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Suor Angelica for Liceu, Barcelona, Marguerite (*Faust*) for Salzburg Festival, Leonora (*Il trovatore*), Liù (*Turandot*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) and Leonora (*Oberto*) for La Scala, Milan, Norma for Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and in Madrid, Turin and Tel Aviv, Mimi for Arena di Verona, Paris Opéra, Bavarian State Opera, Teatro Regio, Teatro di San Carlo, Naples, and Torre del Lago Festival, Elvira (*I puritani*) for Paris Opéra, Violetta (*La traviata*) for Berlin State Opera and Bavarian State Opera, Elena (*I vespri siciliani*) in Turin, Leonora (*Il trovatore*) for Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, Valencia, Amelia (*Simon Boccanegra*) for Rome Opera, La Fenice, Venice, Dresden Semperoper and Berlin State Opera with Daniel Barenboim, Amalia (*I masnadieri*) for La Fenice and Julia (*La Vestale*) for Dresden Semperoper.

Agresta performs widely in concert with such conductors as Barenboim, Nicola Luisotti, Michele Mariotti, Zubin Mehta, Carlo Montanaro, Riccardo Muti, Nosedà and Christian Thielemann.

Source: Royal Opera House



(Braşov, Romania)

**Aurelia Florian** was born in Romania where she has completed her musical studies (singing and piano), she studied at the Music faculty of the university of Transylvania in Brasov and specialized herself in belcanto singing in master classes with the Romanian soprano Mariana Nicolesco.

At the Romanian Atheneum Bucharest (with the George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra) she was highly acclaimed for singing the soprano part in Mahler's IV symphony (under M<sup>o</sup> David Gimenez Carreras), and in 2009 she had a big success with the contemporary opera "Celan" written and conducted by Peter Ruzicka.

At the Verdi Festival Parma she made highly acclaimed debuts as Amalia in Verdi's *I Masnadieri* as well as Desdemona. Further recent highlights include the title part in the opening of Puccini's *La Rondine* as well as Donna Anna at Deutsche Oper Berlin, her successful house debuts (always with Verdi's *La Traviata*) with Bavarian State Opera Munich, Opera Zurich, Norske Opera Oslo among others. In autumn 2016 she will return to the Bavarian State Opera Munich before giving her role debut as Mimi/*La Bohème* with the NTT Tokyo.

Source: Opera Musica



(Montclair, New Jersey)

Of **Michael Fabiano's** debut as Lensky in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* at the Royal Opera, *The Sunday Times* in London wrote: "I can't think of a Lensky at Covent Garden who has held the audience so spellbound in 40 years of *Onegin*-going... a glorious debut." The recipient of the 2014 Beverly Sills Artist Award and the 2014 Richard Tucker Award, Mr. Fabiano is the first singer

to win both awards in the same year, and is considered one of the greatest tenors in the world today.

In the summer of 2019 he performed in recital in Turku, Finland, and performed in a concert with orchestra for the Theatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro.

Mr. Fabiano began the 2019/20 season portraying Des Grieux in Massenet's *Manon* at the Metropolitan Opera, and starring in a season-opening gala for Michigan Opera Theatre entitled *An Evening with Michael Fabiano*. He will assume the title roles in *Don Carlo* at the Opéra Bastille and the Royal Opera, Hoffmann, in a new production of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Opéra Bastille, and perform at the Teatro Real as Alfredo in *La Traviata*.



(Sonora, Mexico)

**Arturo Chacón-Cruz**, a native of Sonora, Mexico, has established himself in recent years as a leading tenor with exciting appearances in renowned theaters and concert halls across the globe. He has sung over 50 roles in more than 25 countries.

Since winning Plácido Domingo's Operalia Competition in 2005, Arturo's career has seen a successful and steady development. His repertoire spans from Bellini and Donizetti to Puccini and Verdi. Some of his more sought after roles are: Rodolfo, the Duke of Mantua, Alfredo, Jacopo Foscari, Gabriele Adorno, B.F. Pinkerton, Hoffmann, Werther, and Romeo to name a few.

He has sung private recitals for His Majesties Queen Sofia and King Juan Carlos of Spain, as well as another one for all the leaders of Iberoamerica, and His Majesty King Felipe of Spain. Recent highlights include two critically acclaimed role debuts: One as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, in Spain, as well as his first Nemorino in Donizetti's "Elixir of Love" in Italy.



(Cairo, Egypt)

Praised for her "lustrous" tone (Opera News) and "beautifully polished" presentation (San Francisco Chronicle), soprano **Amina Edris** won joint First Prize and Audience Prize at the inaugural Concours Bordeaux Medoc Lyrique in 2018. Born in Egypt and raised and trained in New Zealand, Edris participated in the San

Francisco Opera's Merola Program, during which she made her well-received debut as Norina in *Don Pasquale*. Subsequently becoming an Adler Fellow at the San Francisco Opera, Edris has over the past two seasons debuted as Frasquita in *Carmen*, Contessa Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, Annina in *La Traviata* and in the world-premiere of Bright Sheng's *Dream of the Red Chamber*, while building her wider repertoire to encompass the title role in *Manon*, Leïla in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* and Musetta in *La Bohème*.



(Chicago, Illinois)

A former winner in 2012 of Plácido Domingo's prestigious Operalia competition and of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, American soprano, **Janai Brugger**, begins the 2015-16 season as Michaela *Carmen* at Washington National Opera, and sings the role again later in the season at Lyric Opera of Kansas. Identified by *Opera News* as one of their top 25 "brilliant young artists" (October 2015 issue), Janai joins the Metropolitan Opera for their Rising Stars concert series and makes several US concert appearances during the season, along with various recital performances. She makes her debut as Norina *Don Pasquale* at Palm Beach Opera, and returns to Los Angeles Opera to revive the role of

Musetta *La Bohème* which she sings under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel.

A native of Chicago, the artist obtained a Master's degree from the University of Michigan, where she studied with the late Shirley Verrett. She won her Bachelor's degree from DePaul University where she studied with Elsa Charlston. In 2010, Miss Brugger participated in The Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera, and went onto become a young artist at Los Angeles Opera for two seasons.



(Warsaw, Portland)

Baritone **Artur Ruciński** belongs to a select group of Polish opera singers who have risen to international fame in recent years.

Born in Warsaw, he studied at the Academy of Music and started building his repertoire in performances with the Warsaw Chamber Opera and at the Warsaw National Theatre, where he made his debut in 2002 singing the title role in „Eugene Onegin”, of which Polish Music Journal reported „...Artur Rucinski's beautiful singing and lyric quality was the highlight of the evening”. Soon followed invitations to sing with Valery Gerghiev „Prinz Jelecky” in The Queen of Spades, title role in Onegin and „Valentin” in a new Robert Wilson production of Faust.

Artur Ruciński devotes part of his busy schedule to concert performances and appearances on Radio and Television at Warsaw Festival, in Paris, Oslo, Dresden, Vienna, Berlin, to name some, singing repertoire from Handel's Messiah to Penderecki's Lukas Passion. The memorial concert of Gdansk with Britten's War Requiem under Neville Marriner received wide attention.



(Owensboro, Kentucky)

Lauded for his “stentorian Verdi style” by the Chicago Tribune and as “warm-toned, vivacious and humane” by the San Francisco Chronicle, baritone **Anthony Clark Evans** is quickly gaining recognition as one of the most promising Verdi baritones of his generation. The 2019 – 2020 season sees Mr. Evans return to San Francisco Opera in his role debut as Lescaut in Manon Lescaut, conducted

by music director Nicola Luisotti. Mr. Evans also reprises the role of Sharpless in Madama Butterfly at Lyric Opera of Chicago and in his house debut with Opera Philadelphia. Concert work includes his debut with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra singing Brander in Berlioz's La damnation de Faust conducted by Stéphane Denève.

The 2018 – 2019 season saw four role debuts for Mr. Evans, including the title role in Rigoletto with Kentucky Opera, Zurga in the Lee Blakeley production of Les Pêcheurs de perles with Santa Fe Opera, Leporello in Don Giovanni with Tulsa Opera, and Tonio in Pagliacci with Opera San Jose. Mr. Evans also reprised the role of Marcello in La bohème in his house debut with Dallas Opera. Orchestral engagements included the baritone soloist in William Walton's Belshazzar's Feast with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra conducted by Thomas Søndergård, and his debut with the Phoenix Symphony in Beethoven Symphony Number 9 conducted by Tito Muñoz.



(Washington, D.C.)

A recent graduate of Washington National Opera's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, **Soloman Howard** garners high praise from the press for his vivid performances on the great opera and concert stages of the world. Soloman Howard's voice is described as "sonorous" by *The New York Times*, "superhuman" by *The Denver Post*, and "a triumph" by *The Guardian*.

The Anti-Defamation League presented Soloman Howard with their "Making a Difference Award" in the summer of 2016 for raising awareness of voting rights through his performances of *Appomattox* at the Kennedy Center; and for bringing opera into the larger community. Soloman Howard is a proud graduate of the Manhattan School of Music and of Morgan State University.



(Harleysville, Pennsylvania)

**Dale Travis** has become one of the most sought after bass-baritones in America today. With a repertoire encompassing 50 roles in a wide variety of styles from Mozart, Donizetti and Rossini to Strauss, Puccini and Wagner, Mr. Travis has been a frequent guest artist at the most prestigious opera companies in the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Washington Opera, Los Angeles, Santa Fe Opera Festival, Opera Colorado, Spoleto Festival USA, the Saito Kinen Music Festival, Teatro Regio in Torino, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, the Berlin Komische Oper, and the New Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv. Most recently he returned to Glimmerglass Opera for *The Barber of Seville*, *West Side Story*, and *Silent Night*., San Francisco Opera for the Sacristan in *Tosca*, and Benoit/Alcindoro in *La Boheme*, the Minnesota Opera for Nino Rota's *The Straw Hat*, and Santa Fe Opera as Don Alfonso in *Così fan Tutte*. This season he debuts Atlanta Opera and Virginia Opera as Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*. Other future engagements include a return to San Francisco Opera, Dallas Opera, and Tokyo for the role of Frank in *Die Fledermaus*.

Source: Piper Artists Management