

Bolshoi and Met Announce Plan to Co-Produce Three Operas,

Each Starring Anna Netrebko

Moscow -New York, (October 9, 2017) In their first co-production collaboration ever, the Bolshoi and the Met announced plans today to jointly create new productions of Aida, Salome, and Lohengrin, with performances to take place in New York and Moscow between 2019 and 2022. The two companies will pool their creative and technical resources to develop and build the new productions, with the Bolshoi performing the productions at their theater in Moscow and the Met performing them in New York. Although complete casting and creative teams are not ready to be announced, Aida will be staged by Tony Award winning American director Michael Mayer, Salome will be staged by the highly regarded German director Claus Guth, and Lohengrin will be staged by the English director, Phelim McDermott, whose acclaimed production of Philip Glass' Satyagraha played at the Met in 2011. Russia's leading soprano, Anna Netrebko, will perform in all three operas, both at the Bolshoi and at the Met, singing the title roles in Aida and Salome, and the role of Elsa in Lohengrin.

Yannick Nezet Seguin, who will become the Met's Music Director with the beginning of the 2020/21 season, will conduct the initial Met performances of each production in New York and musical director – chief conductor of Bolshoi – Tugan Sokhiev will conduct Salome and Aida productions in Moscow.

Although the Met and the Bolshoi have never worked before as co-producers, there is a long history of Bolshoi performances at the Met, dating back to 1959 when the Bolshoi Ballet performed at the Met for the first time. The Met has not performed in Russia.

Vladimir Urin, General Director of Bolshoi Theatre said: "I am incredibly pleased that our new relationship, which has been in discussion for a year now, will happen and will result in several opera masterpieces appearing in New York and in Moscow. To collaborate with this great theater was our longtime dream"

Peter Gelb, General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera said: "With its recently renovated technical facilities and its highly skilled artisans, the Bolshoi's workshops are amongst the best in the world. We're very pleased to be partnering with such a renowned company as the Bolshoi and to be pooling our resources with them."

Negotiations for the new co-production arrangement began in the summer of 2016 when Urin and Gelb met for the first time at a meeting arranged by John Berry, an advisor to the Bolshoi and former chief of the English National Opera. Irina Chernomourova, the head of the long-term planning department of the Bolshoi, will be also responsible for implementing the project for the Russian side.

The history of The Bolshoi Theatre, the first permanent theatre company in Moscow, began in 1776. Bolshoi history includes numbers of outstanding names and world premieres such as Tchaikovsky's Mazeppa, Eugene Onegin, and Swan Lake. In the 20th century, The Bolshoi became the country's main national theatre. Today it employs 1000 artists. Bolshoi opera presents the major works of Russian and Western 19th-20th century music theatre, as well as specially commissioned works. The company features over 500 performances per season, in front of an audience of more than half a million. In recent seasons, The Bolshoi opera has annually performed 25 different titles, including 5 new productions. The company tours extensively, appearing throughout Russia and at the world's most prestigious opera-houses.

The Metropolitan Opera is the United States' largest performing arts organization and has been one of the world's foremost opera companies for more than 130 years. More than 700,000 people attend live performances at the Met's Lincoln Center home each season, with millions more experiencing the thrill of opera through far-reaching global initiatives such as the acclaimed Live in HD series of movie theater

transmissions and the Saturday afternoon radio broadcast series. The Met's 2017-18 season features 220 performances of 26 works, with five new productions including two Met premieres.

Michael Meyer made his Met debut in 2012 with Verdi's *Rigoletto*, set in a 1960s Las Vegas casino. The director's many Broadway and West End credits include *Hedwig and The Angry Inch* by John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask, *Funny Girl* by Isobel Lennart, *Jule Styne and Bob Merrill*, *Spring Awakening* by Duncan Sheik and Steven Sater, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* by Jeanine Tesori and Dick Scanlan, and *A View from the Bridge* by Arthur Miller.

Claus Guth's recent productions include Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* for Glyndebourne Festival, Handel's *Jephta* at Amsterdam's De Nationale Opera, and Handel's *Rodelinda*, at Teatro Real Madrid. He has been a regular collaborator with many of the world's leading opera companies and festivals including Salzburg Festival, the Zurich Opera, the Royal Opera House and Frankfurt Opera. Particularly acclaimed for his productions of all Wagner's operas, he has directed the complete Ring cycle for the Hamburg Staatsoper. Other highlights have included the opening of Teatro alla Scala's 2013 season with Wagner's *Lohengrin*.

Phelim McDermott's staging of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, his second co-production for the Met and English National Opera, will be seen in New York in 2018, following the success of *Satyagraha* by Philip Glass for the companies. McDermott also directed the Met's 125th Anniversary Gala and *The Enchanted Island*. His production of Verdi's *Aida* has just opened at ENO, following last year's *Akhmaten*, winner of the Olivier Award for Best New Opera Production. His numerous acclaimed theatre productions, often with his own company, *Improbable*, have included the multi-award-winning *70 Hill Lane*, *Lifegame*, *Theatre of Blood* and *Shockheaded Peter*.

One of the world's most in-demand sopranos, Anna Netrebko, was recently seen in Verdi's *Aida* at Salzburg Festival. She made her Bolshoi debut in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* in 2016. Her long association with the Met began with her 2002 debut as Natasha in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*. She is the first soprano in Met history to star in three consecutive opening night performances—the title role in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* (2011), Adina in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore* (2012), and Tatiana in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* (2013). Her other recent starring roles with the company have included Manon in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, Lady Macbeth in Verdi's *Macbeth*, the title role in the Met premiere of Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta*, and Leonora in Verdi's *Il Trovatore*. Later this season, she will make her Met role debut in the title role of Puccini's *Tosca*.

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