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American Masters
James Levine: America's Maestro

**Premieres nationwide Wednesday, June 1, 8-9 p.m. (ET) on PBS
(check local listings)**

Timeline: James Levine – 40 Years at the Met

Since his Met debut in 1971, Maestro James Levine has collaborated with countless great singers, expanded the Met repertory in extraordinary ways, and launched the MET Orchestra's annual concert series at Carnegie Hall, among other major milestones. Over the course of his four decades with the Met, Levine has elevated the quality of the orchestra, chorus, and ensemble to the highest level in the company's history. Here are just a few of the highlights of his unparalleled Met career.

1971

June 5

James Levine makes his Met debut conducting *Tosca*.

1974

January 31

Conducts the Met premiere of Verdi's *I Vespri Siciliani*.

1974 (continued)

February 9

Conducts the eleventh-hour Met debut of Kiri Te Kanawa in *Otello*. Other major artists to debut under Levine include Ben Heppner, Karita Mattila, Jessye Norman, Bryn Terfel, Tatiana Troyanos, and Dolora Zajick.

1976

Named Music Director, having been Principal Conductor since 1973.

October 15

Conducts Puccini's *Il Trittico*, in which Hildegard Behrens and Neil Shicoff make their debuts.

1977

March 15

Conducts the first *Live from the Met* telecast, a performance of *La Bohème* starring Luciano Pavarotti and Renata Scotto.

March 18

Demonstrates his commitment to modern masterpieces by adding Berg's *Lulu* to the Met repertory.

December 22

Conducts an all-star *Tannhäuser* with a cast led by James McCracken, Leonie Rysanek, Grace Bumbry, and John Macurdy, with Bernd Weikl and Kathleen Battle making their debuts.

1979

October 12

With the new production of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, not heard at the Met since 1947, Levine begins building the Mozart repertory to include every major work.

October 16

Conducts the company premiere of Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, starring Teresa Stratas, Richard Cassilly, Astrid Varnay, and Cornell MacNeil.

1981

December 3

A new all-Stravinsky program conducted by Levine features two Met premieres—*Le Sacre du Printemps* and *Oedipus Rex*—as well as *Le Rossignol*.

1982

October 14

Introduces Mozart's *Idomeneo* to the Met, in a new production by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, with Luciano Pavarotti starring in the title role alongside Ileana Cotrubas, Frederica von Stade, Hildegard Behrens, and John Alexander.

December 12

Performs with Frederica von Stade and Nicolai Gedda at a special onstage recital celebrating Gedda's 25th Met anniversary. It's one of a series of recitals where Levine accompanies artists on piano, featuring such singers as Marilyn Horne, Christa Ludwig, Jessye Norman, Renata Scotto, and Martti Talvela.

1983

January

Appears on the cover of *Time* magazine in a profile that declares him as the premier American conductor on the international scene.

September 18

Appears with Leontyne Price on “In Performance at the White House,” a televised concert with President Reagan in the audience and a number of young Met artists also performing.

October 22

Performs in the Met’s two-part Centennial Gala, leading scenes from *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Otello*, *La Fanciulla del West*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and other operas.

1984

October 18

Adds Mozart’s *La Clemenza di Tito* to the Met repertory, with Kenneth Riegel, Renata Scotto, Gail Robinson, and Ann Murray in her company debut.

1985

February 6

Conducts the Met premiere of Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*, with Simon Estes and Grace Bumbry in the title roles.

1986

September 22

The Opening Night performance of *Die Walküre* marks the first part of a new *Ring* cycle, directed by Otto Schenk and designed by Günther Schneider-Siemssen, with Hildegard Behrens, Peter Hofmann, Jeannine Altmeyer, and Simon Estes in the principal roles and Maestro Levine on the podium.

1988

October 12

Levine’s 1089th performance, of *Das Rheingold*, exceeds Artur Bodanzky’s previous Met record (1,088) of most performances by a conductor.

1989

January 16

Leads the Met premiere of Schoenberg’s *Erwartung* with Jessye Norman, who also appears, with Samuel Ramey, in Bartók’s *Bluebeard’s Castle*.

April 1, 8, 15, 22

Conducts the first full cycle of Wagner’s *Ring* in nearly 15 years, in the new Schenk–Schneider-Siemssen production.

1991

December 19

Conducts the world premiere of John Corigliano’s *The Ghosts of Versailles*. Other operas commissioned by the Met under Levine include Philip Glass’s *The Voyage*, Tobias Picker’s *An American Tragedy*, Tan Dun’s *The First Emperor*, and John Harbison’s *The Great Gatsby* (see December 20, 1999).

1992

May 5

Launches the MET Orchestra's annual concert series in Carnegie Hall, showcasing the ensemble in works outside the operatic repertory.

June 3

Takes the MET Orchestra to Europe for Seville Expo '92, the first of a number of international tours the orchestra would embark on. Other cities visited over the years include Tokyo, Frankfurt, Madrid, Vienna, Cologne, Hamburg, Prague, and numerous U.S. cities.

1993

January 14

Conducts a new production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* with Donald McIntyre, Karita Mattila, Francisco Araiza, and Hermann Prey.

April 3

In the third season of Levine-led *Ring* cycles, Christa Ludwig sings her Met farewell as Fricka in *Die Walküre*.

October 21

Leads his third Verdi premiere at the Met: *Stiffelio*, with Plácido Domingo in the title role.

December 2

Adds another Verdi opera to the Met repertory: *I Lombardi*, with Luciano Pavarotti.

1996

February 8

Conducts a new production of *Così fan tutte*, with Cecilia Bartoli making her Met debut as Despina.

February 10

Conducts a Saturday double-header of Verdi's two final masterpieces, *Otello* and *Falstaff*, one of nearly 50 times he has led two performances at the Met in one day. Other memorable same-day pairings include *La Bohème* and *Lulu*, *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Don Carlo*, and *Elektra* and *Simon Boccanegra*.

April 27

Celebrates his 25th anniversary with the Met leading a gala performance of more than 50 Met stars in more than 35 different works.

1997

February 10

Conducts a new production of Berg's *Wozzeck*, followed in November by a new production of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*—two new stagings of 20th-century masterpieces in a single year.

October 16

Conducts the Met premiere of *La Cenerentola*, with Bartoli and Ramón Vargas.

1998

March 1

Leads the inaugural concert of the MET Chamber Ensemble.

1998 (continued)

November 15

Conducts the MET Orchestra in the world premiere of Milton Babbitt's Piano Concerto No. 2 at Carnegie Hall. Other orchestral or chamber works commissioned by Levine include Charles Wuorinen's *Theologoumenon* and *Time Regained*, William Bolcom's Symphony No. 7, Hsueh-Yung Shen's *Legend for Percussion and Orchestra*, and Elliott Carter's *In the Distances of Sleep*.

1999

February 8

Brings Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* to the Met for the first time, with John Tomlinson and Philip Langridge in the title roles.

December 20

Conducts the world premiere of John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*, commissioned by the Met to commemorate the 25th anniversary of his debut, with Jerry Hadley and Dawn Upshaw.

2003

February 10

A new production of *Les Troyens* premieres, with Levine conducting Deborah Voigt, Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, and Ben Heppner in the leading roles.

December 4

Adds Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* to the Met repertory, with Marcello Giordani in the title role.

2004

March 13

Conducts Luciano Pavarotti's farewell performance in *Tosca*. Other artists to have had their final performances under Levine's baton include Marilyn Horne, Hermann Prey, Leontyne Price, Teresa Stratas, and Renata Tebaldi.

2005

March 15

Conducts the farewell of Mirella Freni, celebrating the 50th anniversary of her operatic debut and the 40th anniversary of her Met debut.

2006

December 30

Conducts a matinee of *The Magic Flute* to launch *The Met: Live in HD*, the company's series of live performance transmissions to movie theaters around the world.

2009

March 15

Conducts the Met's 125th Anniversary Gala, which is also a tribute to Levine's longtime collaborator Plácido Domingo.

May 4, 5, 7, 9

Conducts the final cycle of Otto Schenk's *Ring* production. It's the 21st complete cycle of this staging—all of which were conducted by Levine.

2010

September 27

The premiere of a new production of *Das Rheingold*, directed by Robert Lepage, marks Levine's 31st Opening Night, a Met record.

2011

June 5

After a season that includes new productions of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Levine takes the Met on tour to Japan, where he conducts *Don Carlo* on the 40th anniversary of his Met debut.

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