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POLAR MUSIC PRIZE LAUREATE 2020: ANNA NETREBKO

“A soprano with star power in the best sense, a charismatic expressivity that pervades every element of her performance.” – Anthony Tomassini, New York Times

The reigning prima donna of the 21st century, Anna Netrebko has redefined what it means to be an opera star, becoming perhaps the most celebrated soprano in the world. In live performance and on award-winning recordings, her portrayals of opera's most iconic heroines have already made an indelible mark. Now, as she ventures into bolder, more dramatic repertoire, she continues to reach new heights. From singing at the opening ceremony of the 2014 Winter Olympics to becoming the first classical artist named to *TIME* magazine's list of the world's 100 most influential people, Anna serves as opera's leading global ambassador and is widely recognized as one of today's most compelling, committed performing artists in any genre. Offstage, on social media, she shares her infectious joie de vivre—along with her love of family, fashion, and food—inspiring people to live their most colorful lives and to celebrate what makes them unique.

Now at the peak of her powers, Anna is drawing on the exceptional maturation of her voice to conquer the most demanding roles of her career. Her title role debut in *Giovanna d'Arco* at the 2013 Salzburg Festival, and the concurrent release of her *Verdi* album on Deutsche Grammophon, marked the major turning point when she began to leave behind the lighter, more lyric roles for which she had first become known. Soon followed her first performances as Leonora in *Il trovatore* at the Berlin State Opera and as the title character in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* at the Rome Opera, where she sang under Riccardo Muti opposite Azerbaijani tenor Yusif Eyvazov, who would later become her husband. At Munich's Bavarian State Opera, she made her first appearances as Verdi's Lady Macbeth, a role she reprised in 2015-16 to open the tenth anniversary of the Metropolitan Opera's "Live in HD" cinecast series, of which she is the acknowledged face and the most frequently featured star. Soon after, she triumphed in the title role of *Giovanna d'Arco* in La Scala's season-opening production (2015); made her first foray into Wagner as Elsa in *Lohengrin* in Dresden (2016); and gave her first performances as Adriana Lecouvreur at the Mariinsky Theater Second Stage, as Aida at the Salzburg Festival, as Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier* at her third La Scala opening (2017), and as Tosca at the Met (2018).

Anna continues her transition into heavier, more complex roles in the 2019-20 season, making her title role debut in Puccini's *Turandot* at the Bavarian State Opera, singing her first Elisabetta in Verdi's *Don Carlo* at the Semperoper Dresden, starring in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at Paris's Opéra Bastille, and opening her fourth La Scala season in the title role of Puccini's *Tosca*. This same role is also the vehicle for her returns to Covent



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Garden and the Metropolitan Opera, where she makes multiple appearances this season, headlining the company's New Year's Eve Gala and reprising her star turn as Verdi's Lady Macbeth opposite Plácido Domingo, marking the first time the two will have shared the New York stage. To round out the season, Anna rejoins her husband, tenor Yusef Ivanov, for concerts in Minsk, St. Petersburg, Madrid, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Prague, Vienna, Hamburg, Liège and Berlin. Last season, the couple made concert debuts at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie and the Verona Arena and headlined Paris Opera's 350th anniversary celebrations, highlighting a 2018-19 season that also saw Anna sing her first Leonora in Verdi's *La forza del destino* at the Royal Opera House, make house title role debuts in *Aida* and *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the Metropolitan Opera, and give recitals with Malcolm Martineau at New York's Carnegie Hall, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and destinations in Europe.

Anna's present dominance represents the culmination of more than two decades on the opera stage. It was in considerably lighter fare that she first burst onto the international scene, pairing her already rich and flexible voice with vivacity, sensuality and wit in the ingénue lyric roles of Mozart and *bel canto* opera. She made her stage debut at just 22, as Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Kirov Opera under the baton of her then mentor, Valery Gergiev. However, it was in 2002, bookended by memorable first appearances at the Met and Covent Garden, that her triumphant Salzburg Festival performances as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* most decisively announced her arrival as a star. Fresh successes followed, in signature roles that also included the leading ladies of Verdi's *La Traviata*, Puccini's *La bohème*, Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette*, Massenet's *Manon*, Bellini's *La sonnambula*, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Don Pasquale* and *L'elisir d'amore*, and Prokofiev's *War and Peace*. These took her to such leading opera houses as the Met, San Francisco Opera, the Royal Opera House, Vienna State Opera, Paris Opera, Zurich Opera, Berlin State Opera, and Munich's Bavarian State Opera, as well as back to Salzburg, where she became a regular fixture. She appeared as herself alongside Anne Hathaway and Julie Andrews in Hollywood's *Princess Diaries II* (2004) and performed alongside Plácido Domingo for an audience of tens of thousands at Berlin's Waldbühne on the eve of the 2006 World Cup soccer final. In 2007, the year she was named to the "Time 100" list, she headlined London's famous "Last Night of the Proms," made her Carnegie Hall debut in concert with the late Dmitri Hvorostovsky, and serenaded film director Martin Scorsese on the CBS broadcast of the 30th Annual Kennedy Center Honors in front of the President of the United States. In 2016 she became one of only a few artists ever to perform a sold-out solo recital at the Metropolitan Opera.

Anna had attained superstar status, but her thirst for new challenges and increasingly powerful voice drew her to ever more complex roles. These included the title character of Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* and Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, as well as Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*, a notoriously formidable part that in 2011—the year she made her debut at Milan's La Scala – was the vehicle for a triumph in the Met's premiere staging of the opera. This marked the first of an unprecedented three consecutive season-opening productions she would headline at the New York house, culminating with a new



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treatment of *Eugene Onegin* in 2013-14. She scored similar successes beyond the opera house, starring in Robert Dornhelm's *La bohème: The Film*, released in 2008 to mark the composer's 150th birthday; singing alongside Andrea Bocelli in the BBC's telecast of the 2008 Classical BRIT Awards; giving a recital with Daniel Barenboim at the Berlin Philharmonie; appearing as a featured performer at *Newsweek* and *Daily Beast's* 2012 Women In the World Summit; and reuniting with Hvorostovsky for a televised concert at Moscow's Red Square. Affirming her standing as one of Russia's national treasures, she was chosen to sing the Olympic Hymn live at the internationally televised opening ceremony of the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi.

An exclusive Deutsche Grammophon recording artist since 2003, the soprano boasts an extensive discography that includes solo albums, complete opera recordings, and concert repertoire. Her 2016 solo release, *Verismo*, debuted at No. 1 on the classical charts in dozens of countries, besides scoring a Grammy nomination and winning the Diapason d'Or de l'Année award in the "Vocal Recital" category. Her previous solo albums for the yellow label – *Opera Arias*, *Sempre Libera*, *Duets*, *Russian Album*, *Souvenirs*, *In the Still of Night*, *Anna Netrebko: Live at the Metropolitan Opera*, *Anna Netrebko: Verdi*, *Verismo*, and *DIVA: The Very Best of Anna Netrebko*—have all been bestsellers, as have her full-length recordings of *La traviata*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *La bohème*, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, *Iolanta*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Britten's War Requiem*, *the Stabat Mater*s of both Pergolesi and Rossini, and Strauss's *Four Last Songs*. In their first recording collaboration, in 2017 Anna and her husband released *Romanza*, a collection of original love duets by Russian producer Igor Krutov. On film, her Wagner debut in *Lohengrin* was recently released on DVD and Blu-ray, while other highlights from her videography include *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, *Betrothal in a Monastery*, *La traviata*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *I puritani*, *Manon*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Don Pasquale*, *Anna Bolena*, *Eugene Onegin*, *La bohème*, *Don Giovanni*, *Il trovatore*, *Macbeth*, and a DVD of music videos, titled *Anna Netrebko: The Woman, the Voice*.

Anna was a 2018 Metropolitan Opera Guild Luncheon Honoree. Her other honors and awards include Grammy nominations for her recordings *Violetta* and *Russian Album*; a 2017 International Opera Award for "Best Female Singer"; the 2016 Opera News Award; *Musical America's* 2008 "Musician of the Year"; Germany's prestigious Bambi Award; and the UK's Classical BRIT Awards for "Singer of the Year" and "Female Artist of the Year." A dual citizen of Austria, in 2017 she was awarded the country's "Kammersängerin"—bestowed only upon its most distinguished opera singers—and in 2018 she received the American Austrian Foundation's Exchange Prize. In her native Russia, she was awarded the Russian State Prize (the country's highest award in the field of arts and literature) in 2005, and in 2008 she was given the title of "People's Artist of Russia."

Born in 1971 in Krasnodar, Russia, Anna Netrebko studied vocal performance at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. A mother and passionate advocate for children's causes, she supports a number of charitable organizations, including SOS-Kinderdorf



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International and the Russian Children's Welfare Society. Since 2006, she has been a global ambassador for Chopard jewelry.

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