Great Performances at the Met: Akhnaten

Four-time GRAMMY nominee Philip Glass’ masterpiece premieres nationwide Sunday, April 5 at 12 p.m. on PBS (check local listings)

Synopsis:
Season 14 of Great Performances at the Met continues Sunday, April 5 at 12 p.m. on PBS (check local listings) with Academy Award-nominated composer Philip Glass’ Akhnaten. Anthony Roth Costanzo stars as the legendary pharaoh, Akhnaten, alongside J’nai Bridges as Nefertiti with Dísella Lárusdóttir as Queen Tye and Zachary James as Amenhotep III. Karen Kamensek conducts in her Metropolitan Opera debut.

The final part of Glass’ Portrait Trilogy (preceded by “Einstein on the Beach” and “Satyagraha”) and sung in English, Phelim McDermott’s production is set during the 17-year reign of Egyptian Pharaoh Akhnaten, around 1350 B.C. At the funeral of Amenhotep III, the heart of the deceased pharaoh is weighed against a feather to determine if he will travel through into the afterlife. Then, Amenhotep’s son steps forward and his coronation ceremony begins. As the new pharaoh rises to make his first pronouncement at the Window of Appearances, he reveals his intentions to form a monotheistic religion. He changes his name from Amenhotep IV, meaning “spirit of Amon,” to Akhnaten, meaning “spirit of Aten.” Aten, the sun god, is glorified by Akhnaten, his wife Nefertiti and his mother Queen Tye. Akhnaten leads a revolt to banish the old religion and replace it with his own, but he enters the temple and finds the priests still performing the old religious rituals. Akhnaten banishes them and forms the new order of Aten. Meanwhile, Queen Tye is worried as she senses unrest beyond the city’s walls. A crowd gathers outside the palace gates and break through the doors, marking the tragic end of Akhnaten’s reign. Internationally acclaimed American mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato—the star of the Met’s new production of Agrippina—is program host.
Experience Philip Glass’ masterpiece portraying the Egyptian Pharaoh as he rises to the throne.

Experience composer Philip Glass’ visionary masterpiece portraying the impact of the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhnaten as he rises to the throne. Stars Anthony Roth Costanzo in the title role. Karen Kamensek conducts.

Notable Talent:
- Anthony Roth Costanzo – Akhnaten
- Dísella Lárusdóttir – Queen Tye
- J’Nai Bridges – Nefertiti
- Aaron Blake – High Priest of Amon
- Will Liverman – General Horemhab
- Zachary James – Amenhotep III
- Joyce DiDonato – Host

Run time: 3 hours

Production Credits:
- Philip Glass – Composer
- Karen Kamensek – Conductor
- Phelim McDermott – Production
- Kevin Pollard – Costume Designer
- Bruno Poet – Lighting Designer
- Tom Pye – Set and Projection Designer
- Sean Gandini – Choreographer

For the Met, Gary Halvorson directs the telecast. David Frost is Music Producer. Mia Bongiovanni and Elena Park are Supervising Producers, and Louisa Briccetti and Victoria Warivoronchik are Producers. Peter Gelb is Executive Producer. For Great Performances, Bill O’Donnell is Series Producer; David Horn is Executive Producer.

Underwriters:
Corporate support for Great Performances at the Met is provided by Toll Brothers, America’s luxury home builder®. Major funding for this Great Performances at the Met presentation is provided by the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Arts Fund, The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation and public television viewers.
Series Overview:

Great Performances at the Met is a presentation of THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET, bringing the best of the Metropolitan Opera into the homes of classical music fans across the United States.


About WNET

WNET is America’s flagship PBS station: parent company of New York’s THIRTEEN and WLIW21 and operator of NJTV, the statewide public media network in New Jersey. Through its new ALL ARTS multi-platform initiative, its broadcast channels, three cable services (THIRTEEN PBSKids, Create and World) and online streaming sites, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than five million viewers each month. WNET produces and presents a wide range of acclaimed PBS series, including Nature, Great Performances, American Masters, PBS NewsHour Weekend, and the nightly interview program Amanpour and Company. In addition, WNET produces numerous documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings, as well as multi-platform initiatives addressing poverty and climate. Through THIRTEEN Passport and WLIW Passport, station members can stream new and archival THIRTEEN, WLIW and PBS programming anytime, anywhere.

About The Met

Under the leadership of General Manager Peter Gelb and Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin, The Metropolitan Opera is one of America’s leading performing arts organizations and a vibrant home for the world’s most creative and talented artists, including singers, conductors, composers, orchestra musicians, stage directors, designers, visual artists, choreographers, and dancers. The company presents more than 200 performances each season of a wide variety of operas, ranging from early masterpieces to contemporary works. In recent years, the Met has launched many initiatives designed to make opera more accessible, most prominently the Live in HD series of cinema transmissions, which dramatically expands the Met audience by allowing select performances to be seen in more than 2,200 theaters in more than 70 countries around the world.