

Opera San José Presents Verdi's

La traviata

SAN JOSE, CA (March 5, 2018) – One of the most treasured operas of all time, *La traviata* is told in waltz time, giving us the life of the most beautiful woman in Paris. Dancing away her days, Violetta survives on the generosity of the wealthiest men of France, living in luxury until she meets Alfredo Germont, who, having nothing, offers her love instead. For a short spring, she and Alfredo live an idyllic life in the country until his father convinces her that their relationship is harming Alfredo's sister. She gives him up and returns to a man who has kept her in the past, and everything crashes down around her. Verdi created one of the world's most successful works for the stage when he penned the perennial *La traviata*.

"In Verdi's masterpiece, we are swept away by the spark of love, the sense of duty, the desire for salvation and the overwhelming passion of two lovers torn apart by societal and familial demands," said stage director Shawna Lucey. "Our setting in the Belle Époque perfectly matches the sumptuousness of Verdi's music as well as the extreme passion and pain of Violetta and Alfredo. 'It is all champagne and tears - fresh perversity, fresh credulity, fresh passion, fresh pain,' wrote Henry James of the play. All of these themes are magnified in the opera and we shall revel in them all."

La traviata will be sung in Italian with English supertitles. Run-time is approximately three hours. Opera San José presents six performances of this opera, opening in San José's California Theatre on April 14, 2018, closing April 29, 2018. The California Theatre is at 345 S. First Street in downtown San José.

Joseph Marcheso, Opera San José's Music Director and Principal Conductor, serves as conductor for *La traviata*. Mr. Marcheso most recently conducted *The Flying Dutchman* in February and has conducted nineteen productions for Opera San José, including last season's West Coast premiere of Puccini's *La Bohème* and Campbell's *Silent Night*. Mr. Marcheso has also conducted the world premiere of Mark Weiser's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Puccini's *La bohème*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Tosca*, Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Bizet's *Carmen* and Mozart's *The Magic Flute* to name some.

Opera San José's resident conductor and chorus master **Andrew Whitfield**, who serves as assistant conductor and chorus master for *La traviata*, will conduct the final two performances on April 27 and April 29. Mr. Whitfield most recently conducted the final two performances of *The Flying Dutchman*, February 23 and February 25. He has also conducted Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, was assistant conductor of Puccini's *La bohème* and chorus master for all four 2016-17 season productions.

Shawna Lucey makes her Opera San José debut as stage director of *La traviata*. Ms. Lucey is an American theater and opera director based in New York City who completed her undergraduate degrees in Theater (BA) and Italian (BA) at the University of Texas at Austin. After working in the Barnard and Columbia Theater department as well as at the world-famous Bread and Puppet Theater, she moved to Russia to pursue a Master's degree. She has since directed Offenbach's *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* for Wichita Grand Opera and Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* for Skylight Music Theater and has worked at the Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Bolshoi Theater and Schauspiel Hannover.

Soprano **Amanda Kingston**, a member of the resident company, will appear as Violetta in *La traviata*. Ms. Kingston most recently appeared as Magda in *La rondine* and was praised by Jim Sohre of *Opera Today* who wrote, “As the enigmatic, evasive ‘swallow’ of the title, Amanda Kingston presented a Magda that embodied all that one could wish in this part.” Ms. Kingston debuted with the company as Fiordiligi in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* last September and made her professional debut as Josephine in *HMS Pinafore* with Nevada Opera.

Tenor, **Pene Pati**, will make his company debut appearing as Alfredo in *La traviata*. Mr. Pati earned major attention in 2015 after his competition successes, taking both Second and Audience Prize at Operalia, and Second Prize at Neue Stimmen. Moving on from a successful summer as part of San Francisco Opera’s Merola Opera Program, he became an Adler Fellow and has since performed and studied a wide range of roles in San Francisco including Messenger (*Aida*), Count Lerma and Royal Herald in Verdi’s *Don Carlo*, and Pinkerton in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*, as well as being part of the world premiere of Bright Sheng’s *Dream of the Red Chamber*, composed by Cao Xueqin.

Tenor **Dane Suarez**, also a member of the resident company, will appear as Alfredo for two performances, April 15 and April 27. Mr. Suarez covered the role of Erik in Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman* in February and has appeared on the front page of the Arts Section of the *New York Times* for his “beautiful, soaring, and moving” performance as Cavaradossi in Puccini’s *Tosca* with LoftOpera. This past season, he made his John F. Kennedy Center debut with Washington National Opera as Ely Parker in Glass’s *Appomattox* and returned to Opera in the Heights to perform Rodolfo in Puccini’s *La bohème*.

Malcolm MacKenzie, baritone, returns to Opera San José and will appear as Germont. Mr. MacKenzie made his company debut appearing as Don Alfonso in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* in which Tad Malone of *The Metro* said, “Malcolm MacKenzie strikes a delicate balance with Don Alfonso—painting the man as both conniving and disarmingly charismatic. MacKenzie’s voice is deep, yet warm and textured, cresting on high notes before expanding into mellifluous refrains.”

Trevor Neal, bass, will also appear as Germont, singing the role for two performances, April 15 and April 27. Mr. Neal is a member of this season’s resident company and most recently appeared as Rambaldo in last November’s production of Puccini’s *La rondine* for which he was praised by Jim Sohre of *Opera Today* who wrote, “Trevor Neal intoned a mellifluous Rambaldo, his imposing stature and smooth baritone are a real asset to the production.” Mr. Neal recently performed the roles of Killian in Weber’s *Der Freischütz*, with Virginia Opera, Sciarrone in Puccini’s *Tosca* with Opera North, and the Bonze in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* with Ash Lawn Opera.

Mason Gates, tenor and member of the resident company, will appear as Gastone. Mr. Gates recently appeared as the Steersman in Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman* and was commended for his performance by Michael Vaughn of *OperaVille* who said, “Tenor Mason Gates, who projects a Mickey Rooney get ‘er done insouciance as the helmsman (complete with handstands!), sings a beautifully haunting ode to the southern winds, “Mit Gewitter und Sturm aus fernem Meer,” and falls asleep.” Mr. Gates also appeared as Prunier in Puccini’s *La rondine* last November and Jonathan Dale in Puts and Campbell’s *Silent Night* last season.

Opera San José’s production of *La traviata* includes set designs by **Erik Flatmo**, costumes designed by **Elizabeth Poindexter**, lighting design by **Pam Gray**, and wig and makeup designs by **Christina Martin**.

Dates: Performances: April 14, 15m, 19, 22m, 27, 29m



Opera San José

Time: “m” indicates matinee at 3pm; all other performances are at 8pm

Location: California Theatre, 345 South 1st Street (between San Carlos and San Salvador), San José, CA

La traviata Preview: April 3, 2018 from 12 – 1 p.m., California Theatre, 345 S. First Street in downtown San José; Please use the Market Street entrance; Free vocal preview with members of the cast. For information, call 408-437-4450.

Introduction to Opera: General Director Larry Hancock will present a free 45-minute talk to ticket holders about the opera at the California Theatre before each performance of *La traviata*. The talk begins at 6:30pm prior to evening performances and at 1:30pm prior to Sunday matinees. No reservations required.

Press Room: www.operasj.org/news-events/press-room

To learn more about *La traviata*, please visit operasj.org

Performances supported, in part, by a Cultural Affairs grant from the City of San José.

About Opera San José

Opera San José, performing at the beautiful California Theatre in downtown San José, is a professional, regional opera company that is unique in the United States. Maintaining a resident company of principal artists, Opera San José specializes in showcasing the finest young professional singers in the nation. In addition to mainstage performances, Opera San José maintains extensive educational programs in schools and in the community at large, and offers preview lectures and “Introduction to Opera” talks for all mainstage productions.

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