



Opera San José



# OPERA SAN JOSÉ PRESENTS MOZART'S **THE MAGIC FLUTE** April 18 – May 3, 2020

SAN JOSE, CA (26 February 2020) – Comedy, adventure, and brilliant singing are on the bill as **Opera San José** presents Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. This magical adventure follows a wandering prince who must complete three quests to win his true love's hand. Filled with fantasy and romance, the opera dramatically alternates spoken dialogue with some of Mozart's most beautiful music. Featuring colorful characters including a lovesick bird catcher, a giant serpent, and the Queen of the Night, *The Magic Flute* has charmed audiences since its first performance in 1791. Sung in German with English subtitles, *The Magic Flute* will be conducted by Donato Cabrera, music director of the California Symphony and Las Vegas Philharmonic, and directed by Brad Dalton, who has staged major opera productions throughout the United States and abroad, including for San Francisco Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Washington Opera, and others. It will be presented at the magnificent California Theatre, the elegant 1927 former movie palace meticulously restored to opulent splendor and now one of the world's most intimate opera houses. *The Magic Flute* will be performed **April 18 – May 3, 2020** (dates/times below) at the **California Theatre**, 345 South 1<sup>st</sup> Street, San José. For tickets (\$55-\$195) or more information, visit [operasj.org](http://operasj.org) or call (408) 437-4450.

*The Magic Flute* takes the form of a *singspiel*, meaning it includes singing and spoken dialogue (a bit like a contemporary Broadway musical). The libretto was likely drawn from several sources, including wildly original ideas from famous producer and first-ever Papageno, Emanuel Schikaneder, as well as a variety of folk tales and ancient lore, plus operatic, political, and philosophical themes of the day. The repeated use of signs of three throughout the opera (three tasks, three ladies, three spirits, three gates to the temple) has suggested that the work references the Freemasons, an exclusive brotherhood of which Mozart and Schikaneder were both members.

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*The Magic Flute* by composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and German librettist Emanuel Schikaneder will be sung in German with English supertitles with a run time of approximately three hours, including intermission. The creative team includes Donato Cabrera (Conductor), Brad Dalton (Stage Director), Ryan McGettigan (Set Design), Alyssa Oania (Costume Design), Christopher Ostrom (Lighting Design), Christina Martin (Wigs/Makeup), and Christopher James Ray (Chorus Master). Christopher Ray, Opera San José’s current Resident Conductor, will be conducting May 1<sup>st</sup> and May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Tenor **Alexander McKissick** makes his Opera San José debut this season as Tamino, the young prince who sets out on an adventure to find and rescue his princess. He has performed the leading roles of Nikolaus Sprink in Kevin Puts’ new opera *Silent Night*, the Governor of Montevideo in Leonard Bernstein’s *Candide*, Roderigo in Verdi’s *Otello*, the First Armored Guard in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, and understudied the title role in *Faust* with the Washington National Opera. He is a 2018 Sullivan Foundation Career Grant Winner, a 2017 Sara Tucker Study Grant Winner, and a Toulmin Scholar.

Soprano **Natalie Image** returns to make her role debut as Pamina, the Queen of the Night’s beautiful daughter. Earlier this season, Image was seen at San Francisco Opera as Barbarina in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* and the Dew Fairy in Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*. Her career highlights include performances as Cinderella in the North American premiere of Alma Deutscher’s *Cinderella* with Opera San José, Clorinda in Rossini’s *La Cenerentola* with the Merola Opera Program, and Barber’s *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM).

After making her company debut in Opera San José’s 2018-19 season, soprano **Brittany Renee Robinson** returns to star as Queen of the Night. Recent performances include her house debut as Konstanze at Opera Orlando, the roles of Madame Herz and Nella in a double bill production of Mozart’s *Impresario* and Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi* for Knoxville Opera, as well as Lucia in Knoxville’s Education/Outreach production of Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*. A frequent recitalist, Robinson has toured with the Siena Chamber Orchestra in Italy and across the United States. Concert engagements include her performance as a featured artist with the Wynton

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Marsalis US Tour of the Abyssinian Mass with Chorale Le Chateau and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, and appearances with the critically acclaimed American Spiritual Ensemble.

Baritone **Eugene Brancoveanu** fills the role of the bird-catcher, Papageno. A current member of Opera San José’s resident company, Brancoveanu won raves recently as the Count di Luna in the company’s well-received production of *Il trovatore*. His career highlights include receiving a Tony Award for his role in Baz Luhrmann’s production of Broadway’s *La bohème*, and his performance in the title role of Shostakovich’s *Orango* with the Los Angeles Symphony under the direction of Esa-Pekka Salonen and Peter Sellers, recorded for Deutsche Grammophon.

To close out the season, soprano **Elena Galván** makes her role debut as Papagena, a cheerful girl who first appears disguised as an old woman. After making her Opera San José debut in the 2017-18 season as Lisette in Puccini’s *La rondine*, Galván returned this season to portray Adele in Strauss’ *Die Fledermaus* and Gretel in Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel* as a member of the resident company. She recently debuted with the Oakland Symphony to perform Mahler’s *Symphony No. 4* and starred as Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* in her company debut at Hawaii Opera Theatre. Galván has also been a member of notable Young Artist programs at companies such as Virginia Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, and Opera Saratoga.

The ladies in service of the Queen of the Night are filled by soprano **Kerriann Otaño**, soprano **Katherine Gunnick**, and mezzo-soprano **Stephanie Sanchez**. Otaño and Sanchez are both members of the 2019-20 resident company, and were recently seen as Leonora (Otaño) and Inez (Sanchez) in Opera San José’s crowd-pleasing production of *Il trovatore*. Gunnick’s history with Opera San José dates back to the 2017-18 season, where she appeared as Bianca in Puccini’s *La rondine* and covered the roles of Fiordiligi in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, Magda in *La rondine*, and Senta in Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman*. In the 2018-19 season, she returned as a member of the resident company. Gunnick also won first place in the 2013 Irene Dalis Vocal Competition.

Tenor **Mason Gates** stars as Monostatos, the mean and greedy servant of Sarastro. This season, Gates returned as an Associate Member of Opera San José’s resident company, recently appearing as Ruiz in *Il trovatore*. Roles previously performed with Opera San José include

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Beppe in Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci*, Flask in the company premiere of Heggie’s *Moby-Dick*, Goro in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*, Prunier in Puccini’s *La rondine*, the Steersman in Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman*, Gastone in Verdi’s *La traviata*, Jonathan Dale in Puts and Campbell’s *Silent Night*, and his company debut as Don Curzio in the 2015-16 production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. A two-time recipient of the encouragement award from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Gates was also a festival artist at Utah Arts Festival two years in a row, as well as a Vocal Fellow at the esteemed Music Academy of the West.

For his Opera San José debut, bass **Kevin Thompson** fills the role of the tall and imposing Sarastro, otherwise known as the High Priest of the Sun. His 2019-20 season opened with the US premiere of Bottesini’s *Ali Baba* at Opera Southwest, where he sang the role of Aboul Hassan. Thompson was also seen at New Orleans Opera, where he reprised his role as Thibaut in Tchaikovsky’s *Joan of Arc*. Thompson appeared in the world premiere of *Die Weisse Furstin* in Munich and in the US premiere of *Haggadah shel Pesah (Passover in Exile)* at Carnegie Hall in New York. He is a recipient of numerous awards including those from the Olga Forrai Foundation, National Symphony Competition, Liederkrantz Foundation, Florida Grand Opera, Career Bridges, and the Don Giovanni International Competition, among many others.

Bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** returns to star as The Speaker. He previously appeared as the Bonze in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* during the 2018-19 season, and as Baron Douphol in the 2017-18 production of Verdi’s *La Traviata*. In 2015, Skinner appeared in leading roles in two world premiere operas in San Francisco. He portrayed Fray Luis in Lisa Scola Prosek’s *The Lariat* (Winner of the NY Center for the Contemporary Opera “Atelier” Award) and Casaubon in Allen Shearer’s *Middlemarch in Spring* (Composers, Inc./Operasmiths). Other career highlights include appearances as Eric Gold/Ghost of Bazzetti in the West Coast premiere of Heggie’s *Great Scott* with San Diego Opera, the Forester in *Cunning Little Vixen* with West Edge Opera, and Barone in *La Traviata* with San Francisco Opera, among many others. Skinner has a long association with San Francisco Opera, with over 380 performances in 55 productions.

Also featured in the cast will be **Andrew Metzger** (First Priest), **Joshua Hughes** (Second Priest), **Taylor Thompson** (First Armed Man), and **Glenn Louis Healy** (Second Armed Man).

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Other special events for *The Magic Flute* include the following:

**Introduction to Opera:** Larry Hancock presents an engaging free 45-minute talk about the opera to ticket holders before every performance of *The Magic Flute*. The talk begins at **6:30pm prior to evening performances**, and at **1:30pm prior to Sunday matinees**. *Open to all ticket holders; no reservations required.*

**The Magic Flute Preview:** A free vocal preview with members of the cast will be offered from **12:00pm–1:00pm, Tuesday, April 7** at the California Theatre. Guests are asked to use the Market Street entrance for this preview. For more information, please call **(408) 437-4450**.

**Opera at Your Doorstep Lecture Series:** Longtime Opera San José subscriber Bradford Wade offers FREE previews of *The Magic Flute* to increase one’s understanding and enjoyment of opera. Dates for *The Magic Flute* lecture talks will be announced in March 2020.

*The Magic Flute* is staged at the magnificent California Theatre, the elegant 1927 former movie palace meticulously restored to opulent splendor and now one of the world’s most intimate opera houses.

**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.

### FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

**WHAT:** Comedy, adventure, and brilliant singing are on the bill as **Opera San José** presents Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*. This magical adventure follows a wandering

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**WHEN:** April 18 – May 3, 2020

**TIMES:** 8:00pm, Saturday, April 18, 2020  
3:00pm, Sunday, April 19, 2020  
8:00pm, Thursday, April 23, 2020  
3:00pm, Sunday, April 26, 2020  
8:00pm, Friday, May 1, 2020  
3:00pm, Sunday, May 3, 2020

**INFO:** For information or to order tickets, visit [operasj.org](http://operasj.org), call (408) 437-4450, or visit the **Opera San José Box Office** (2149 Paragon Drive, San José).

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