

FRIDA

SEASON 2022-2023



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A Message from the President **Chelsea Lamego**

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I welcome you to El Paso Opera's *Frida* by Robert Xavier Rodríguez at the Abraham Chavez Theatre. *Frida* kicks off El Paso Opera's 29th season and is our first post-pandemic return to grand opera. We are honored to produce and perform *Frida* for our community, and we hope you enjoy the show!

Composer Robert Xavier Rodríguez perfectly captures Frida Kahlo, her passion, and her legacy with his mesmerizing fusion of opera, folkloric music, mariachi music, and Broadway musical theater. His hauntingly beautiful work, performed in Spanish and English, presents the icon's life from her teenage embrace of revolutionary politics to her early death.

El Paso Opera's Artistic Director Justin Lucero offers a fresh and exciting take on the 1991 original piece. His dedication to the El Paso and Latinx communities made this a production he HAD to produce for El Paso. It is a demonstration of his artistic focus and vision and reflects El Paso Opera's commitment to diversity and inclusion. El Paso Opera continues to be at the forefront of Opera companies across the nation as we innovate artistically,

explore new venues, and reach new audiences with unique productions.

Opera is one of the most historical and well-respected art forms today. It combines all of the elements of art: words, music, drama, and dance. Apart from its entertainment, health, and educational value, having an Opera company elevates our city's stature, is a catalyst for tourism and promotes economic development. El Paso Opera will continue its mission of making Opera available and accessible to the people in our region.

The last couple of years were undoubtedly a challenge and adjustment for people and organizations across the globe. We felt it as a non-profit arts organization. We are proud of our organization's ability to pivot during the pandemic and continue sharing Opera with our community through small outdoor offerings like #CurbsideOpera, which was a smashing success that reached a new, larger audience.

We thank you for your commitment to El Paso Opera. We are proud and honored to have been a part of the El Paso arts community for the past 28 seasons. El Paso Opera would not be here without the longtime support and dedication of our community to keeping this art alive in the Paso del Norte region.

**We hope you enjoy our
29th season!**

Viva Frida & Viva la Opera!

Un Mensaje del Presidente

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En nombre de la Junta Directiva, les doy la bienvenida a El Paso Opera y su *Frida*, por Robert Xavier Rodríguez, en el Teatro Abraham Chávez. *Frida* inicia la temporada número 29 de El Paso Opera y es nuestro regreso postpandemia a la gran Ópera. Nos sentimos honrados de producir e interpretar Frida para nuestra comunidad y esperamos que disfruten del espectáculo.

El compositor Robert Xavier Rodríguez captura perfectamente a Frida, su pasión y su legado con su fascinante fusión de Ópera, música folclórica, música de mariachi y teatro musical de Broadway. Su trabajo inquietantemente hermoso, realizado en español e inglés, presenta la vida del ícono desde su aceptación adolescente de las políticas revolucionarias hasta su temprana muerte.

El director artístico de El Paso Opera, Justin Lucero, ofrece una versión fresca y emocionante de la pieza original de 1991. Su dedicación a las comunidades latinas y de El Paso lo obligó a que él debiese producirla para El Paso. Esto es muestra de su enfoque artístico y visión que reflejan el compromiso de El Paso Opera con la diversidad y la inclusión. El Paso Opera continúa estando a la vanguardia de las compañías de ópera en todo el país a medida que innovamos artísticamente, exploramos nuevos lugares y alcanzamos nuevas audiencias a través de producciones únicas.

La Ópera es una de las formas de arte más históricas y respetadas hoy en día. Combina todos los elementos del arte: texto, música, drama y danza. Además de su valor de entretenimiento, salud y

educación, tener una compañía de Ópera eleva la estatura de nuestra ciudad, es un catalizador para el turismo y promueve el desarrollo económico. El Paso Opera continuará su misión de hacer que la ópera esté disponible y accesible para la gente de nuestra región.

Los últimos dos años fueron, sin duda, un desafío y un ajuste para las personas y organizaciones de todo el mundo. Nosotros pudimos sentirlo siendo una organización artística sin fines de lucro. Estamos orgullosos de la capacidad de nuestra organización para pivotar durante la pandemia y continuar compartiendo Ópera con nuestra comunidad a través de pequeñas presentaciones al aire libre como #CurbsideOpera, la cual tuvo un éxito rotundo que llegó a una audiencia nueva y más grande.

Les agradecemos su compromiso con El Paso Opera. Estamos orgullosos y honrados de haber sido parte de la comunidad artística de El Paso durante las últimas 29 temporadas. El Paso Opera no estaría aquí sin el apoyo y la dedicación de nuestra comunidad para mantener vivo este arte en la región del Paso del Norte. Esperamos que disfruten de nuestra temporada número 29.

¡Viva Frida y Viva La Ópera!





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A Message from the Executive Director **Arianne Marcee**

Welcome to **Frida!** After numerous postponements we are thrilled to finally present this special opera to El Paso! Frida Kahlo has become an icon for her talent, her determination and her ability to work, live and create through immense pain. Her story is perfect for our return to the Abraham Chavez Theatre!

We are honored to have Frida brought to life by Catalina Cuervo with El Paso's own Ricardo Herrera as her Diego Rivera. Led by the wonderful Maestra Suzanne Mallare Acton and staged by our own Artistic Director Justin Lucero, this opera brings Frida alive again so that we may all experience, honor and appreciate her artistic impact.

This season has another wonderful performance in store for you! On June 1 & 3, 2023 join us again at the Chavez to experience **La Traviata**. The world's most popular opera is perfect for both new opera audiences and seasoned opera goers alike. Experience an opera and love story for the ages. Tickets on sale September 1 (unless you buy yours at our advance sale tonight in the lobby!) at epopera.org or ticketmaster.com.

We are a small organization, made up of dedicated and hard-working individuals.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our Board of Trustees, President Chelsea Lamego, office manager Mariana Sandoval, Artistic Director Justin Lucero, Artistic Associate Cherry Duke and our Season 29 Maestro Award Recipients Stacey Hunt Spier and the Hunt Family Foundation. They are wonderful examples of the loyalty and commitment that has fueled El Paso Opera for over 29 years.

We hope you have as wonderful a time this evening as we have had preparing for the show!

**El Paso Opera
It's in your life!**

**Thank you for
keeping us there!**



Un Mensaje de la Directora Ejecutiva

Arianne Marcee

¡Bienvenidos a *Frida!* Despues de numerosas postergaciones, estamos emocionados de finalmente presentarle esta ópera especial a El Paso. Frida Kahlo se ha convertido en un ícono por su talento, su determinación y su capacidad de trabajar, vivir y crear a través de un immenso dolor. Su historia es perfecta para nuestro regreso al Teatro Abraham Chávez.

Nos sentimos honrados de que Catalina Cuervo dé vida a Frida al lado del propio Ricardo Herrera de El Paso como su Diego Rivera. Dirigida por la maravillosa Maestra Suzanne Mallare Acton y puesta en escena por nuestro propio Director Artístico Justin Lucero, esta ópera vuelve a dar vida a Frida para que todos podamos experimentar, honrar y apreciar su impacto artístico.



Esta temporada incluye otro espectáculo para ustedes. Los días 1 y 3 de junio del 2023 acompañenos nuevamente en el Chávez para vivir *La Traviata*. La ópera más popular del mundo es perfecta tanto para el público nuevo como para aquellos experimentados en la ópera. Vivan una ópera y una historia de amor para todos los tiempos. Boletos a la venta el 1 de septiembre (a menos que compren los suyos esta noche en el vestíbulo en nuestra venta anticipada) en epopera.org o ticketmaster.com.

Somos una organización pequeña, formada por personas dedicadas y trabajadoras. Me gustaría expresar mi sincero agradecimiento a nuestra Junta Directiva, la presidenta Chelsea Lamego, la gerente de la oficina Mariana Sandoval, el Director Artístico Justin Lucero, la Asociada Artística Cherry Duke y nuestros ganadores del Premio Maestro de la Temporada 29, Stacey Hunt Spier y la Fundación de la Familia Hunt.

Todos ellos son maravillosos ejemplos de la lealtad y el compromiso que ha alimentado a El Paso Opera durante más de 29 años. ¡Esperamos que lo pasen tan bien esta noche al igual que nosotros preparamos para este espectáculo!

**El Paso Opera
¡Está en tu vida!**

¡Gracias por mantenernos ahí!



The life and art of Frida Kahlo could undeniably be described as “operatic.” When I first came across the piece about four years ago, I immediately wondered why it hadn’t been staged in El Paso before, and if we could mount it for its 30th anniversary (it premiered at the American Music Theater Festival in 1991). Our dedicated Board of Trustees enthusiastically approved, and, though it is now the 31st anniversary – thanks, COVID! – it’s happening!

“I paint myself because I am often alone and I am the subject I know best.” In our reimagined production – which was awarded one of only eight competitive OPERA America Next Stage Grants supporting new productions of “under-performed North American works...for new audiences” – you are invited to take a glimpse through ‘The

A Message from the Artistic Director **Justin Lucero**

Frame’ at a three-dimensional canvas as three Calaveras recruit the spirits of Frida’s art to escort her on a memory-journey of the milestone moments of her exceptional life. Moments that inspired her staggering body of work, and fueled her until her death at the age of 47.

“At the end of the day, we can endure much more than we think we can.” Despite Kahlo’s inspiration coming from her physical suffering or romantic passions, she nonetheless wears the same expression in all her self-portraits: that of a strong woman. Appropriately, our production is co-lead by three incredibly strong women, leading lady Catalina Cuervo, conductor Suzanne Mallare Acton, and EPO Executive Director Arianne Marcee. And permit me to dedicate tonight’s performance to the strongest, most important woman in my life, my mother, Shirley. Mom, “I heaven you.”



Un Mensaje del Director Artístico

Justin Lucero

La vida y el arte de Frida Kahlo podrían describirse innegablemente como "operísticos". Cuando me encontré por primera vez con la pieza hace unos cuatro años, inmediatamente me pregunté por qué no se había puesto en escena en El Paso antes, y si podríamos montarla para su 30 aniversario (ésta se estrenó en el American Music Theater Festival en 1991). Nuestra dedicada Junta Directiva la aprobó con entusiasmo y aunque ahora es el 31 aniversario – ¡gracias, COVID! – está sucediendo.

"Me pinto a mí misma porque a menudo estoy sola y soy el tema que mejor conozco". En nuestra producción reimaginada – la cual recibió uno de los ocho competitivos subsidios de OPERA America Next Stage que fomenta nuevas producciones de "obras norteamericanas poco realizadas... para nuevas audiencias" – se les invita a observar a través del "marco" un lienzo tridimensional mientras que tres calaveras invocan a los espíritus en el arte de Frida para acompañarla en un viaje de recuerdos de los momentos más importantes de su excepcional vida. Momentos que inspiraron su asombroso corpus de obras, y la impulsaron hasta su muerte a la edad de 47 años.

"Al final del día, podemos aguantar mucho más de lo que pensamos". A pesar de que la inspiración de Kahlo

proviene de su sufrimiento físico o pasiones románticas, ella siempre lleva la misma expresión en todos sus autorretratos: la de una mujer fuerte. Apropiadamente, nuestra producción está codirigida por tres mujeres increíblemente fuertes, la protagonista Catalina Cuervo, la directora Suzanne Mallare Acton y la Directora Ejecutiva de EPO Arianne Marcee. Y permítanme dedicar la actuación de esta noche a la mujer más fuerte e importante de mi vida, mi madre, Shirley. Mamá, "yo te cielo".





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PRESENTS

FRIDA

Music by Robert Xavier Rodríguez

Lyrics & Monologues by Migdalia Cruz | Book by Hilary Blecher

An opera in two acts sung in English and Spanish with projected translations

CAST

Frida Kahlo	Catalina Cuervo
Diego Rivera	Ricardo Herrera
Woman 1	Laura León
Woman 2	Leah Dexter
Man 1	Bernardo Bermudez
Man 2	Javier Ortiz
Calaveras	Samantha Dávalos
	Mariana Sandoval
	Mauricio Perusquia
Dancers	Folklorico Quetzales

Scenery constructed by
Lucky Giraffe (Austin, TX)Scenic painting by
Bob Diven (Las Cruces, NM)Scenic finishing by
Olivia Fuentes (El Paso, TX)Stagehands & equipment by
South Coast Audio /
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This production was made possible in part by a Next Stage Grant from OPERA America, funded by Gene Kaufman, Terry Eder-Kaufman, and New Vision for NYC Opera, with additional support from the Mellon Foundation.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Conductor	Suzanne Mallare Acton
Stage Director	Justin Lucero
Scenic Designer	Afsaneh Aayani
Video Designer	Adam J. Thompson
Lighting Designers	Hideaki Tsutsui
	Marissa Diaz
Production Manager	Adrian Salas
Stage Manager	Karina Ortega
Assistant Stage Manager	Malori Cade
Choreographer	Jaime Carrasco
Assistant Stage Director	Cherry Duke
Rehearsal Pianist	Guillermo de la Garza
Supertitles	Antonio Motta
Firearms Consultant	Jay Stratton
Sound Supervisor	Daniel Maciel
Makeup Designer	Ivan Cano
Wardrobe Supervisor	Carlos de la Garza-García
Wardrobe Assistant	L. Eddie Wilson
Production Assistants	Abner Astudillo
	Jessica Broaddus
Scenic Assistant	Ana Lucía García
	Antonio Motta
	Bryan Moses



ABRAHAM CHAVEZ THEATRE

SATURDAY, AUGUST 27, 2022
7:30PM*Frida* runs approximately 2 hrs. 25 min.,
inclusive of a 20-minute intermissionThis production contains moments of
simulated gunshots

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SYNOPSIS

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ACT I

Scene 1 – Mexico City, 1923. Young Frida and her male gang of Cachuchas accost a group of schoolgirls. Frida and Cristina, her sister, watch a mother beg to bury her dead son. Frida takes heart in the promise of the revolution.

Scene 2 – Frida's Room, Coyoacan. Frida tells Cristina of her expectations of life upon coming of age.

Scene 3 – A Street in Mexico City, 1925. Frida and Alejandro kiss and board a bus. The bus crashes, and Frida is severely injured, but she resolves to live and to begin her life as a painter.

Scene 4 – Diego's Mural/Wedding, 1927-29. Diego Rivera paints his wife and Frida presents him with her portfolio. Diego asks Frida's father for her hand in marriage.

Scene 5 – Diego's Studio, 1929-30. Diego's work is denounced in Mexico. The Riveras resolve to try their luck in the USA.

Scene 6 – New York City, 1932. Frida and Diego attend a dinner party hosted by the Fords and the Rockefellers. Rockefeller commissions a mural from Diego.

Scene 7 – Rockefeller Center, 1934. Rockefeller has the mural destroyed because it includes Lenin. Frida miscarries.

ACT II

Scene 1 – San Angel, Mexico, 1934. In her blue house, Frida chooses to ignore the women parading through Diego's adjacent pink house, but is horrified to discover her sister among them.

Scene 2 – 1937. Leon Trotsky and his wife, join the Riveras in their house. Frida and Trotsky have a love affair.

Scene 3 – Frida's Bath. Frida retreats to the seclusion of her bath and the comfort of female lovers.

Scene 4 – In Mexico, Diego sells US actor Edward G. Robinson some of Frida's work. In NYC, Frida talks to her photographer lover as she models for him. Frida and Diego decide to divorce.

Scene 5 – Frida's Imagination, 1939-1954. Haunted by her physical and emotional pain, Frida becomes more and more prolific as a painter, with such works as The Wounded Deer and Self Portrait with Monkeys.

Scene 6 – Back at Frida's Hospital Bed. In a delirium, Frida more quickly relives episodes of her life, including when Diego proposed to marry her again. The Calaveras lead a celebration as she departs with a cry of "Viva, la vida...alegría...and Diego."



SINOPSIS



ACTO I

Escena 1 – Ciudad de México, 1923. La joven Frida y su pandilla masculina, los Cachuchas, se enfrentan a un grupo de colegialas. Frida y Cristina, su hermana, ven a una madre suplicar que se entierre a su hijo muerto. Frida se identifica con la promesa de la Revolución.

Escena 2 – Habitación de Frida, Coyoacán. Frida le cuenta a Cristina sus expectativas de vida al llegar a la mayoría de edad.

Escena 3 – Una Calle en la Ciudad de México, 1925. Frida y Alejandro se besan y abordan un autobús. El autobús se estrella y Frida resulta gravemente herida, pero se aferra a vivir y comenzar su vida como pintora.

Escena 4 – Mural/Boda de Diego, 1927-29. Diego Rivera pinta a su esposa y Frida le presenta su portafolio. Diego le pide al padre de Frida su mano en matrimonio.

Escena 5 – Estudio de Diego, 1929-30. La obra de Diego es rechazada en México. Los Rivera **15** deciden probar suerte en Estados Unidos.

Escena 6 – Nueva York, 1932. Frida y Diego asisten a una cena organizada por los Ford y los Rockefeller. Rockefeller encarga un mural a Diego.

Escena 7 – Rockefeller Center, 1934. Rockefeller ordena que el mural sea destruido porque incluye a Lenin. Frida aborta.

ACTO II

Escena 1 – San Ángel, México, 1934. En su casa azul, Frida elige ignorar a las mujeres que desfilan por la casa rosa adyacente de Diego, pero se horroriza al descubrir a su hermana entre ellas.

Escena 2 – 1937. León Trotsky y su esposa, se unen a los Rivera en su casa. Frida y Trotsky tienen una aventura amorosa.

Escena 3 – El Baño de Frida. Frida se retira a la reclusión de su baño y al consuelo de amantes femeninas.

Escena 4 – En México, Diego vende al actor estadounidense Edward G. Robinson parte del trabajo de Frida. En Nueva York, Frida habla con su amante fotógrafo mientras modela para él. Frida y Diego deciden divorciarse.

Escena 5 – La Imaginación de Frida, 1939-1954. Atormentada por su dolor físico y emocional, Frida se vuelve cada vez más prolífica como pintora, con obras como El venado herido y Autorretrato con monos.

Escena 6 – De Vuelta en la Cama de Hospital. En un delirio, Frida revive más rápidamente episodios de su vida, incluso cuando Diego le propuso casarse con ella nuevamente. Las Calaveras encabezan una celebración mientras ella parte con un grito de "Viva la vida... alegría... y Diego".



ARTISTS

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CATALINA CUERVO



RICARDO HERRERA

Known as the "Fiery Soprano", Colombian-American singer Catalina Cuervo holds the distinction of having performed the most productions of Astor Piazzolla's opera *Maria de Buenos Aires* in the history of the Opera and is considered one of the leading voices for Latin American Repertoire in the world. Ms. Cuervo has performed the role of "Maria" over 50 times and for numerous prestigious companies including New York City Opera, Florida Grand Opera, The Atlanta Opera, Cincinnati Opera and Anchorage Opera to name a few of about fifteen productions. Ms. Cuervo made her debut as Frida Kahlo in the revival of the opera *Frida* with Michigan Opera Theater in 2015 and then she performed the role with Cincinnati Opera (2017), Florida Grand Opera (2019), The Atlanta Opera (2019), Anchorage Opera (2020) and Portland Opera (2021). Those productions ended with all sold-out shows and triumphant reviews, one even calling *Frida* the best Opera of the 2015 season.

As a consequence, Ms. Cuervo was named one of the 5 most successful Colombian Sopranos in the Opera World by the Ministry of Culture of Colombia. Catalina Cuervo has a prolific symphonic career as well. She recently debuted at Teatro Municipal de São Paulo, Brazil, singing Manuel de Falla's *El Amor Brujo* and *The Three Cornered Hat*. She has also performed with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, New Mexico Philharmonic, The Atlanta Symphony, San Louis Symphony and Filarmónica de Medellin, to name a few. Besides singing Opera, Catalina Cuervo is also one of the leading voices of Symphonic Rock/Metal Music in Colombia, a model and dancer.

Bass-baritone, performer, teacher, stage director. "Ricardo Herrera nearly stopped the show with his hearty singing..." —Anthony Tommasini (*The New York Times*). Ricardo has sung more than 50 operatic roles around the USA, Mexico, and Europe. He has sung with San Francisco Opera, Gotham Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, El Paso Opera, Oldenburgisches Staatstheater, Cincinnati Opera, Caramoor Festival, Atlanta Opera, among others. Mr. Herrera was honored the First Prize Award Winner of the Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation Competition in New York City and was also invited to participate in Plácido Domingo's Operalia World Opera Contest. He is a member of the voice faculty of the University of Illinois and continues to give masterclasses around the USA, Mexico, Europe, and Asia.

He is the founder of HerrVocalis training program, presenting masterclasses around the world. Mr. Herrera has sung the role of Diego Rivera in Detroit, Cincinnati, Miami, Atlanta and is most excited for this performance of *Frida* in his beloved El Paso.



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ARTISTS



LAURA LEÓN

Laura León, Cuban soprano, is quickly becoming a rising star on the operatic stages with a voice that "sparkles, seduces and languishes." Laura made her début as Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* with Orchestra Miami under the baton of Elaine Rinaldi, as well as a Florida Grand Opera début as Frasquita in *Carmen* with subsequent performances as Mother of Peasant in *Before Night Falls* and Cristina Kahlo in *Frida*. This season, Ms. León performs as Adina in *L'Elisir D'Amore* with Opera in Williamsburg, Woman I in *Frida* with Opera Southwest, Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* with On Site Opera, Giulietta/ Antonia/ Stella/ Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with Opera Lousiane, and Mozart Mass in C and Vaughan Williams Serenade to Music with Mid-America Productions at Carnegie Hall.

Next season's engagements include the role of Ana María in Héctor Armienta's *Zorro* with Opera Southwest.

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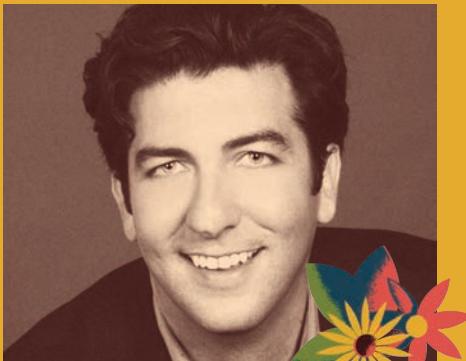
LEAH DEXTER

Leah Dexter, mezzo-soprano, is praised for being a performer of "commanding force, both vocally and dramatically" (*Chicago Classical Review*). A frequent artist with Chicago Opera Theater, she was seen for the 2021-22 season as Mercédès in *Carmen*, Ib in *Becoming Santa Claus*, and Mistress Paddington in the world premiere of Wallen's *Quamino's Map*. Ms. Dexter also joined Michigan Opera Theatre for revival performances of the critically-acclaimed opera *Frida*, for which she reprised her roles of Dimas' Mother and Lupe. Furthermore, she joined Lyric Opera of Chicago for Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, singing the role of Bertha. Additional performances include alto soloist with the DePaul Community Chorus in a program of African-American classical vocal music, a recital presentation with LYNX of Chicago, and the Chicago Symphony Chorus for Ravel's *Daphnis & Chloe* and Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*. A Detroit area native, Ms. Dexter attended the University of Michigan for her musical degrees and is a past Studio Artist of Sarasota Opera, at which she won the Anne J' O Donnell Outstanding Artist Award for her work with the company.



ARTISTS

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BERNARDO BERMUDEZ

Bernardo Bermudez, Venezuelan Mexican-American baritenor; new roles performed include Laurentino in *Cruzar la Cara de la luna*, Don José in *Carmen*, and the Messenger in *Aida* with San Diego Opera. Engagement in companies include San Diego Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Long Beach Opera, Anchorage Opera, Portland Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, and The San Diego Symphony to name a few. Notable roles include Diego Rivera in *Frida*, Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Danilo in *The Merry Widow*, the title role in *Don Giovanni*, Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Vidal in *Luisa Fernanda*. Summer Festival include Opera North, Opera NEO and The Music Academy of the West. Most recently he received The Music Academy of the West Alumni Enterprise Award in 2019 and 2020.

Mr. Bermudez is Co-founder of Opera4Kids, a new non-profit organization, whose mission is to make music and its education accessible to young audiences through digital programming and live performances.



JAVIER ORTIZ

Javier Ortiz, bass-baritone, has played over 35 leading and supporting operatic roles and has appeared as a soloist in 15 major orchestral works with opera companies and orchestras across the United States. Internationally, Mr. Ortiz performed "Mozart Arias and Duets" in concert at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, appeared as a soloist for the 25th Anniversary of the Netherlands Opera's residence in the Muziektheater, sang Sarastro's arias from *Die Zauberflöte* with the Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra, and joined the Rotterdam Opera Days in concert and as Colline in *La bohème*. He portrayed the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Pluton in *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers*, and Colline in *La bohème* with Opera Studio Nederland. Mr. Ortiz also toured Mexico with the Chicago Arts Orchestra as the bass soloist in *Al Combate* by Ignacio Jerusalem in celebration of UNAM's designation as a UNESCO world heritage site. Recently, he played Zachariah in a condensed off-broadway version of *Nabucco*, headlined a holiday concert with the Cambridge Symphony Orchestra, and appeared in the filmed versions of The American Baroque Opera Company's *Dido and Aeneas* as Aeneas, and Opera on Tap/Playground Opera's *La cenerentola* as Alidoro. Performances in 2021-2022 included the roles of Dottore Grenvil in *La traviata* with Opera Southwest, *All is Calm* with Opera North, Pelée in the North American premiere of Marais' *Alcyone* with the American Baroque Opera Company, Petate Vendor/Guillermo Kahlo/Mr. Rockefeller/Edward G. Robinson in *Frida* with Opera Southwest, and concert performances with the New Mexico Performing Arts Society.



ARTISTS



SAMANTHA DÁVALOS



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MARIANA SANDOVAL

Samantha Dávalos, soprano, obtained her Master of Music in Voice, Musical Theatre, and Opera Performance at Arizona State University in 2021 after receiving her bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from The University of Texas at El Paso in 2019. She has performed many roles including Puccini's title role in *Suor Angelica*.

Other roles Ms. Dávalos has performed include Mother in *Heart of Oksana*, La Badessa in *Suor Angelica*, Linda Morales in *Hometown to the World*, Anna Maurrant in *Street Scene*, and Harriett Beecher Stowe in *The Infinite Energy of Ada Lovelace*. Samantha is also a member of the Arizona Women's Collaborative, a group of female and non-binary identifying artists who work across disciplines through cooperative composition.

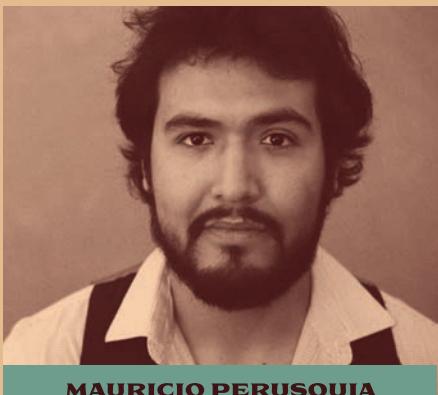
Mariana Sandoval, mezzo-soprano, is a Mexican-American opera singer based out of El Paso, Texas. Ms. Sandoval obtained her bachelor's and master's degree in Vocal Performance from The University of Texas at El Paso. In 2013, she performed as a chorus member for "Opera Bhutan," which presented the first-ever western opera performance in the Kingdom of Bhutan and featured principal artists from across the globe. Ms. Sandoval has performed in numerous productions with El Paso Opera, Opera UTEP, and the UTEP Dinner Theatre.

Ms. Sandoval made her El Paso Opera debut as a soloist in the 2016 holiday concert *'Tis the Season*. She covered the role of Tisbe in the 2017 production of Rossini's *La cenerentola*, performed the role of The Sandman in their 2018 production of Humperdinck's *Hänsel & Gretel*, was one of the soloists for their 2018 concert *Mozart by Moonlight*, and performed the lead role of Dinah in their 2019 production of Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*. Most recently, she played the title role in Opera UTEP's presentation of the first act of Torroba's zarzuela *Luisa Fernanda*. Ms. Sandoval is currently a Resident Artist with El Paso Opera and will be part of the Tyler Young Artists Program with Opera on the James in Lynchburg, Virginia this fall.



ARTISTS

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MAURICIO PERUSQUIA

Mauricio Perusquia, baritone, holds an MM in Opera Performance from Arizona State University and a BM in Voice Performance from the University of Texas at El Paso. Mr. Perusquia currently performs with the Operatunity Troupe of Arizona Opera, bringing music to disadvantaged schools in the Phoenix area. He has participated in the #CurbsideOpera initiative as a Resident Artist with El Paso Opera.

He has engaged in many new opera works such as Arizona Opera's *Silent Night* and the New Works reading of the jazz interactive opera, *Marie Begins*, as well as concert works such as Cipher. With ASU's Music Theatre and Opera program, Mauricio performed the roles of Frank in *Street Scene*, and Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*. He has also performed many roles with Gilbert and Sullivan Company of El Paso for which he is on the board of directors, and is a past Joan Quarm Scholarship winner.



SUZANNE MALLARE ACTON

Suzanne Mallare Acton is chorus master and resident conductor of Detroit Opera (formerly Michigan Opera Theatre), providing musical leadership in over 160 productions. Her conducting credits for the company include *West Side Story*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *The Music Man*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *La bohème*, *Die Fledermaus*, *La traviata*, *A Little Night Music*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, *Carmina Burana*, *The Medium*, *Frida*, and *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*.

Ms. Acton's opera credits as conductor also include productions with Dayton Opera, New York's Artpark, August Opera, Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, The Auditorium Theater of Chicago, and Verdi Opera Theatre.

Her symphonic credits include work with Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra, Lexington Bach Festival, Dearborn Symphony, and Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra. For twenty-five years Ms. Acton served as artistic director of the Rackham Choir, and under her leadership the organization was awarded the State of Michigan Governor's Award for Arts and Culture.

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ARTISTS



JUSTIN LUCERO

Justin Lucero (he/him/his) is on faculty at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Drama, as Assistant Professor of Directing for The John Wells Directing Program, of which he is also Associate Coordinator. Prior to his appointment at CMU, he was the inaugural Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fellow in Directing & Theatre Studies for the University of Houston's School of Theatre & Dance and an Artist-in-Residence for the University of Texas at El Paso.

Mr. Lucero is the recipient of a Directing Fellowship with Asolo Repertory Theatre (Florida), a Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation Observership at South Coast Repertory (Los Angeles) a FAIR Assistantship with Oregon

Shakespeare Festival, and a Directing Attachment at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre (London's 25 West End).

He was named to the 2021-2022 BIPOC Leadership Circle by artEquity, in partnership with the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale, and is a 2022-2023 TCG (Theatre Communications Group) Rising Leaders of Color awardee supported by Opportunity Fund and Walt Disney Imagineering.

Mr. Lucero has just completed 10 seasons of affiliation with El Paso Opera for which he has stage directed and/or produced numerous productions, including *Bon Appetit!*, *Pagliacci*, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, *The Magic Flute*, *Trouble in Tahiti*, *Hänsel & Gretel*, and the upcoming *La Traviata*. Recent directing engagements include Abingdon Theatre Company (NY), Kane Repertory Theatre (Chicago), Live & In Color (NY), City Theatre (Pittsburgh), Pittsburgh Festival Opera, and Point Park University. Training: London's East 15 Acting School (MFA in Directing with Distinction). Associate member: Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), an American theatrical union.

Website: justinlucerodirector.com

DESIGNERS

AFSANEH AAYANI

Afsaheh Aayani (Set Design) Stages: Black Super Hero Magic Mama, Main Street Theater: Charlotte's Web, Dog Act, Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus, The Book of Magdalene (Digital World Premiere), Alley Theatre: (Assistant Set Designer) Sweat, Catastrophic Theatre: (Set Designer) Innominate, 4:48 Psychosis, The Drama Squad1,2,3, (Assistant Set Designer) Fefu and Her Friends; Rec Room: (Assistant Set Designer) Pass Over, The Children; Classical Theatre: R.U.R, Lysistrata; A.D. Players: The Christmas Shoes, Unplugged, David The Best Slinger of The West; University of Houston: (Set Designer) Haroun and The Sea of Stories, The Fairytale Lives of Russian Girls, Dear Charlotte, Last Night of Ballyhoo, Luchadora, (Costume Designer) Three Sisters; Landing Theatre: Rapture

Blister Burn, Caught, Oleanna; HGO.co: The Pastry Prince, The Puffed Up Prima Donna; Rogue Production: Two Mile Hollow, Pulsate; Actor's Equity Festival: The Effect. Education: B.A., Art University of Tehran, Puppetry; M.F.A., University of Houston, Scenic Design.

www.afsanehaayani.com



DESIGNERS

ADAM J. THOMPSON

Adam J. Thompson is a video and graphic designer working in film, television, theatre, and digital narratives. He has worked previously as a creative director and a producer and is the Founding Artistic Director of The Deconstructive Theatre Project, a non-profit multimedia storytelling laboratory which he founded and led from 2006 - 2016.

His work as a multimedia performance director and as a video and projection designer has been produced and presented off-Broadway, off-off-Broadway, regionally, and on tour with companies and at venues that include New York Theatre Workshop, The Public Theater, Atlantic Theatre Company, Theatre for a New Audience,

La Mama, Ars Nova, HERE, The Flea, American Theatre Wing, Terminal 5, Beth Morrison Projects, National Sawdust, Boston Lyric Opera, City Theatre, and Diversionary Theatre. He is an alumni of The Public Theater's Devised Theatre Working Group and the HERE Artist Residency Program and is has collaborated with the multimedia performance collectives Big Art Group and The Builders Association. Adam is the recipient of awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, The Jerome Robbins Foundation, and The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation among others and he was an invited exhibitor and ambassador to the 2018 Beijing International Design Biennial.

HIDEAKI TSUTSUI

His lighting designs have been seen from NYC to the West End in London. Mr. Tsutsui has designed for numerous artists and productions such as: Lantern Floating for Peace at the Lincoln Center, Garth Fagan's Thanks 40 at the Joyce Theatre, Osvaldo Golijov's *La Pasión según San Marcos* national tour, Moscow Circus USA Tour, Midtown International Theater Festival, *Sweeney Todd* at Madison Opera and Gravity Radio at Brooklyn Academy of Music. He served as the lighting designer for long time collaborator Mikel Rouse's acclaimed production, *The Demo* at the Krannert Center and at Stanford.

Mr. Tsutsui was also invited to light the 20th Anniversary Dance Gala for Virginia Arts

Festival and for such dance companies as American Ballet Theatre, Mark Morris Dance Group, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Richmond Ballet, Tokyo Ballet and many others. He worked as lighting designer and technical director for Nai Ni Chen Dance Company. Before joining the University of Texas at El Paso, Mr. Tsutsui was Lighting Designer and VP of Operations for Eggshell Light Company in Hawaii, where he designed over 100 corporate events, concerts, and television shows. He's served as lighting designer for live events such as Kevin Hart Live, Cindy Lauper, IBM, Herbalife, New York Life, Intuit, APEC Conference, PBS Hawaii and General Motors.

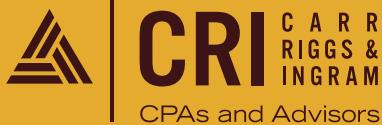
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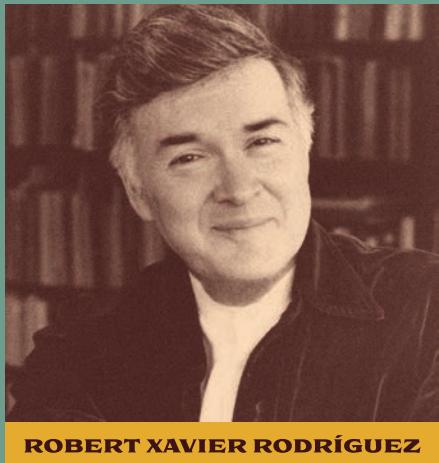


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COMPOSER

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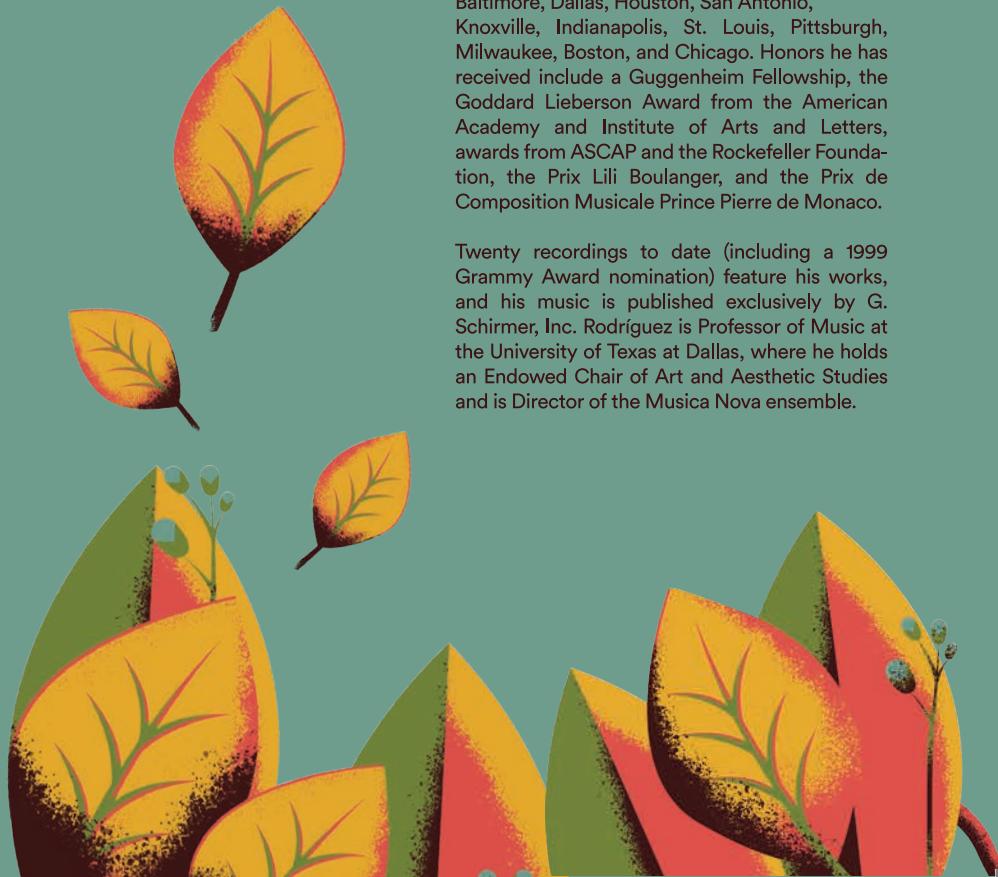


ROBERT XAVIER RODRÍGUEZ

Robert Xavier Rodríguez (b. 1946) has written music in all genres—opera, orchestral, concerto, ballet, vocal, choral, chamber, solo, and music for the theatre and stage.

His work has received over 2,000 professional orchestral and operatic performances in recent seasons by such organizations as the Vienna Schauspielhaus, The National Opera of Mexico, New York City Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, American Repertory Theater, American Music Theater Festival, Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Pennsylvania Opera Theater, Michigan Opera Theatre, Orlando Opera, Aspen Music Festival, Bowdoin Festival, Juilliard Focus and Summergarden Series, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Mexico City Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Knoxville, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Boston, and Chicago. Honors he has received include a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Goddard Lieberson Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, awards from ASCAP and the Rockefeller Foundation, the Prix Lili Boulanger, and the Prix de Composition Musicale Prince Pierre de Monaco.

Twenty recordings to date (including a 1999 Grammy Award nomination) feature his works, and his music is published exclusively by G. Schirmer, Inc. Rodríguez is Professor of Music at the University of Texas at Dallas, where he holds an Endowed Chair of Art and Aesthetic Studies and is Director of the Musica Nova ensemble.



ORCHESTRA

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Violin/Concertmaster	Stephanie Meyers
Viola	Susan Hernandez
Cello	Michael Way
Bass	Will Scholten
Clarinet/Saxophone	Jesse Hernandez
Trumpet/Flugelhorn	Nancy Taylor
Trombone	Frank Otero
Percussion	Leandro Valenzuela
Guitar	Jonathan Lozoza
Accordion Keyboard	Gabriel Longuinhos
Piano	Guillermo de la Garza

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John Tiranno
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Antonio Motta

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Gregory L. Taylor, Beverly Kerbs-Ward and the UTEP Dinner Theatre
Jaime Barba
Hideaki Tsutsui and the UTEP Department of Theatre and Dance
Ruth Ellen Jacobson and the El Paso Symphony Orchestra
Chelsea Lamego
Adrian Ordoñez
Judy Robinson
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Holly Mesarch
Todd Marcee





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