

EL PASO OPERA PRESENTS

— VERDI —

# LA TRAVIATA

FEATURING EL PASO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



EL  
PASO  
OPERA

JUNE 3, 2023 7:30 PM  
ABRAHAM CHAVEZ THEATRE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 04 Message from the President
- 06 El Paso Opera Board & Staff
- 07 Message from the Executive Director
- 09 Message from the Artistic Director
- 11 ***La Traviata*** Cast & Production Team
- 12 ***La Traviata*** Chorus & Dancers
- 13 ***La Traviata*** Synopsis
- 16 Artist Biographies
- 32 El Paso Symphony Orchestra  
& Special Thanks
- 33 Maestro Award & Support the Stars Donors
- 34 Donor List



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# A Message from the President

On behalf of El Paso Opera’s Board of Trustees, I welcome you to El Paso Opera’s ***La Traviata*** by Giuseppe Verdi performed in Italian with English and Spanish supertitles in the Abraham Chavez Theatre. We are honored to produce and perform grand operas like ***La Traviata*** for our community and we hope that you enjoy the show.

***La Traviata*** has been one of the most well-known and performed operas of all time and has music you will likely recall from life and popular movies like *Pretty Woman*. This heart-breaking love story features one of the most iconic and romantic scores of all operas.

***La Traviata*** is based on *La Dame aux Camélias*, a play written by Alexandre Dumas fils in 1852. “***La Traviata***” means “the fallen woman” or “the one who goes astray” and refers to the main character, Violetta Valéry. The inspiration for Violetta was a real woman, Marie Duplessis. Marie was a famous Parisian courtesan who passed away at the age of 23 just five years before the opening of ***La Traviata*** in Venice in 1853. When she passed away, all of Paris mourned! Dumas was one of her lovers.

In ***La Traviata***, Violetta attempts to leave the life she knows behind to finally find true love. After meeting the romantic Alfredo, their love is played out against the hypocrisy of upper-class fashionable society and Violetta must pay the ultimate price. In this romantic tragedy, Verdi perfectly captures contrasting human

emotions – love, envy, jealousy, loyalty and hatred.

***La Traviata*** concludes El Paso Opera’s 29th Season of remaining committed to our mission of making opera accessible for the people in our region. Opera is one of the most historic and well-respected art forms that still exist today. It combines all of the elements of art: words, music, drama, and dance. An opera is one of the only places where you can hear trained and unamplified human voices, accompanied by a live orchestra.

Opera companies provide their communities with entertainment, health, and educational value. They also elevate the stature of the city they serve by being a catalyst for tourism and economic development. El Paso Opera continues to be on the forefront of opera companies across the nation as we innovate artistically, explore new venues, and reach new audiences with unique productions.

We thank you again for your commitment to and support of El Paso Opera. We are proud and honored to have been a part of the El Paso arts community for the past 29 years. We would not be here without the longtime support and dedication of our community to keep this art form alive and thriving in the Paso del Norte region.

**Chelsea Lamego**  
President, Board of Trustees

# Un Mensaje de la Presidente

En nombre de la Junta Directiva de El Paso Opera, les doy la bienvenida a **La Traviata** de Giuseppe Verdi con El Paso Opera interpretada en italiano con supertítulos en inglés y español en el Teatro Abraham Chávez. Nos sentimos honrados de producir e interpretar grandes óperas como La Traviata para nuestra comunidad y esperamos que disfruten del espectáculo.

**La Traviata** ha sido una de las óperas más conocidas e interpretadas de todos los tiempos y tiene música que probablemente podrán recordar de la vida diaria o de películas populares como Pretty Woman. Esta desgarradora historia de amor presenta una de las partituras más icónicas y románticas de todas las óperas.

**La Traviata** está basada en La Dame aux camélias, una obra de teatro escrita por Alexandre Dumas fils en 1852. “**La Traviata**” significa “la mujer caída” o “descarriada” y hace referencia al personaje principal, Violetta Valéry. La inspiración para Violetta fue una mujer real, Marie Duplessis. Marie era una famosa cortesana parisina que falleció a la edad de 23 años, solo cinco años antes del estreno de **La Traviata** en Venecia en 1853. Cuando ella falleció, todo París se lamentó. Dumas fue uno de sus amantes.

En **La Traviata**, Violetta intenta dejar atrás la vida que conoce para finalmente encontrar el amor verdadero. Después de conocer al romántico Alfredo, su amor se enfrenta a la hipocresía de la elegante alta sociedad y Violetta debe pagar el precio máximo. En esta tragedia romántica, Verdi captura

perfectamente las contrastantes emociones humanas: amor, envidia, celos, lealtad y odio.

**La Traviata** concluye la temporada 29 de El Paso Opera de permanecer comprometidos con nuestra misión de hacer que la ópera sea accesible para la gente de nuestra región. La ópera es una de las formas de arte más históricas y respetadas que aún existen en la actualidad. Combina todos los elementos del arte: texto, música, teatro y danza. La ópera es uno de los únicos lugares donde se pueden apreciar las voces humanas entrenadas y sin amplificación, acompañadas por una orquesta en vivo.

Las compañías de ópera brindan a sus comunidades entretenimiento, salud y valor educativo. También elevan la estatura de la ciudad a la que sirven como catalizadores para el turismo y el desarrollo económico. El Paso Opera sigue estando a la vanguardia de las compañías de ópera en todo el país a medida que innovamos artísticamente, exploramos nuevos espacios y llegamos a nuevas audiencias con producciones únicas.

Les agradecemos nuevamente por su compromiso y apoyo a El Paso Opera. Estamos orgullosos y honrados de haber sido parte de la comunidad artística de El Paso durante los últimos 29 años. No estaríamos aquí sin el apoyo y la dedicación de nuestra comunidad desde hace mucho tiempo para mantener viva y próspera esta forma de arte en la región del Paso del Norte.

**Chelsea Lamego**

Presidente, Board of Trustees



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Adrian Salas, **Season 29 Production Manager**

Antonio Motta, **Production Assistant**

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# A Message from the Executive Director

Welcome to ***La Traviata!*** We are so excited to bring the world's most popular opera to life for you here on the Abraham Chavez Theatre stage. ***La Traviata*** lives in pop culture (#ItsInYourLife)~the story brings Julia Roberts to tears in *Pretty Woman* and inspired *Moulin Rouge!* 'Libiamo'—one of the most recognizable songs you'll hear this evening—is in countless advertisements and movies. Katy Perry even wore a ***La Traviata*** inspired dress to the Grammys on which the score of Act 1 is literally woven into the garment! With so many people devoted to this special piece of art it is no wonder it is the most popular opera in the world.

Were you here with us on August 27 for our sold out show of ***Frida?*** If so, you are among those who will experience wonderful examples of how varied opera can be. From the sweeping classical score featuring a complete symphony telling a timeless love story to a contemporary composition telling the story of an artistic icon, opera can bring any story to life! This season has been a great demonstration of the variety within the art while also demonstrating its tremendous beauty and emotional impact. It's been a great season for us and we hope you have enjoyed it as well!

El Paso Opera is a local non-profit organization. We do not bring in tours but present locally produced shows that we have put together for you brick by brick. We are a small organization working hard to contribute to the quality of life of our city through our productions and through numerous free performances throughout the community every season. If you have enjoyed this show, seek us out for one of these free performances around town!

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our Board of Trustees, President Chelsea Lamego, Artistic Director Justin Lucero, Assistant to the Director Holly Mesarch and Artistic Associate Cherry Duke for their steadfast dedication to El Paso Opera. What a great group of people to work with! And we would all like to thank Stacey Hunt Spier & Hunt Family Foundation, this season's Maestro Award winner. We literally couldn't do this without you!

Curious what comes next? Check out our announcements about next season in this very program book!

**Arianne Marcee**  
Executive Director

## Un Mensaje de la Directora Ejecutiva



¡Bienvenidos a **La Traviata!** Estamos muy emocionados de darle vida a la ópera más popular del mundo aquí en el escenario del Teatro Abraham Chávez. La Traviata vive en la cultura pop (#ItsInYourLife)~la historia hace llorar a Julia Roberts en *Pretty Woman* e inspiró *Moulin Rouge!*. 'Libiamo'—una de las canciones más reconocibles que escucharán esta noche—se encuentra en innumerables anuncios y películas. Katy Perry incluso usó un vestido inspirado en **La Traviata** para los Grammy en el que la partitura del Acto 1 está literalmente entretejida en la prenda. Con tanta gente devota a esta especial obra de arte, no es de extrañar que sea la ópera más popular del mundo.

¿Nos acompañaron el pasado 27 de agosto en nuestro show completamente agotado de **Frida**? Si es así, ustedes se encuentran entre los que experimentarán maravillosos ejemplos de cuán variada puede ser la ópera. Desde la arrolladora partitura clásica que presenta una sinfonía completa que cuenta una historia de amor imperecedero hasta una composición contemporánea que cuenta la historia de un ícono artístico. La ópera puede dar vida a cualquier historia. Esta temporada ha sido una gran demostración de la variedad dentro del arte al mismo tiempo que demuestra su tremenda belleza e impacto emocional. Ha sido una gran temporada para

nosotros y esperamos que ustedes también la hayan disfrutado. El Paso Opera es una organización local sin fines de lucro. Nosotros no traemos giras, sino que presentamos espectáculos producidos localmente que construimos para ustedes pieza por pieza. Somos una pequeña organización que trabaja arduamente para contribuir a la calidad de vida de nuestra ciudad a través de nuestras producciones y numerosas presentaciones gratuitas en toda la comunidad cada temporada. Si disfrutaron de este espectáculo, búsquennos para asistir a una de estas presentaciones gratuitas por la ciudad.

Quisiera expresar mi sincero agradecimiento a nuestra Junta Directiva, la presidenta Chelsea Lamego, el director artístico Justin Lucero, la asistente de la directora Holly Mesarch y la asociada artística Cherry Duke por la firme dedicación que le brindan a El Paso Opera. ¡Qué gran grupo de personas con quién trabajar! Y nos gustaría agradecerle a Stacey Hunt Spier y a Hunt Family Foundation, ganadores del Premio Maestro de esta temporada. ¡Literalmente no podríamos hacer esto sin ustedes!

¿Curiosos de lo que viene después? Vean nuestros anuncios sobre la próxima temporada en este mismo libro del programa.

**Arianne Marcee**  
Directora Ejecutiva

# A Message from the Artistic Director

This month marks the completion of five years I have had serving as Artistic Director of your opera company. It has been a privilege and honor. At this milestone moment, I choose to reflect on our journey of artistic successes: an innovative, immersive, in-the-round **Hänsel & Gretel** at Union Depot; an imaginative and unique adaptation of **The Magic Flute** at The Scottish Rite Temple; the timely and sensational “first-ever mariachi opera,” **Cruzar la Cara de la Luna**; a vibrant **Trouble in Tahiti** as our entry in the global centennial celebration of Leonard Bernstein; a modern, visceral reimagining of **Pagliacci** at St. Rogers Depot; a pandemic-pivot streamed delicious delight, **Bon Appetit!** (in my film directorial debut); and of course our mega-smash, frenetic feverdream, **Frida**. All of which included masters-of-their-craft, national and international heavy-hitters, and all of which included new strides in organizational practices of inclusion and intention.

This evening that string continues with an alluring, lush return to grand opera in Verdi’s **La Traviata**. (Which also marks a company classical rep milestone: Latinx representation among the conductor, stage director and both lead roles!) This piece asks us to examine how we answer life’s twists and turns, and how we

respond to the pressures of time and destiny. It also challenges us all to follow our heart. **La Traviata** is a timeless masterwork; and though it’s tragic, it’s a celebration of love and the human capacity for sacrifice, forgiveness, and empathy. My time working with this group of artists and technicians has been yet another career highlight, and I hope you enjoy reveling in their extreme talents as much as I have all process long.

Next season –the company’s 30th!– I am ecstatic to capitalize on the anniversary occasion to celebrate **the artist**. We return to McKelligon Canyon Amphitheatre with **Mozart by Moonlight**, an open-air tribute concert to perhaps the greatest composer-artist opera has ever known, followed by the genius Broadway masterpiece, **Sunday in the Park with George**, Stephen Sondheim’s study of what it means to be an artist. I look forward to continuing the journey with (and for) you.

## Justin Lucero

Artistic Director, & Stage Director of **La Traviata**



## Un Mensaje del Director Artístico

Este mes marca la culminación de cinco años que he servido como Director Artístico de su compañía de ópera. Ha sido un privilegio y un honor. En este momento histórico, quisiera reflexionar sobre nuestro viaje de éxitos artísticos: un innovador, inmersivo y completo **Hänsel y Gretel** en el Union Depot; una adaptación imaginativa y única de **La flauta mágica** en el Templo Scottish Rite; la oportuna y sensacional “primera ópera de mariachi”, **Cruzar la Cara de la Luna**; un **Trouble in Tahiti** como nuestra entrada a la celebración mundial del centenario de Leonard Bernstein; una reinención intensa y moderna de **Pagliacci** en St. Rogers Depot; un delicioso deleite transmitido en línea a causa de la pandemia, **Bon Appetit!** (y mi debut como director de cine); y por supuesto nuestro estremecedor y frenético mega éxito, **Frida**. Todos los cuales incluyeron maestros del oficio, pesos completos nacionales e internacionales, y todos los cuales incluyeron nuevos avances en las prácticas organizacionales de inclusión e intención.

Esta noche, esa secuencia continúa con un atractivo y exuberante regreso a la gran ópera con **La Traviata** de Verdi. (Lo que también marca un logro en el repertorio clásico de la compañía: representación Latinx entre el conductor, el director de escena y ambos papeles principales.) Esta pieza nos pide que examinemos cómo respondemos a los giros y vueltas de la vida, y cómo

respondemos a las presiones del tiempo y el destino. También nos desafía a todos a seguir nuestro corazón. **La Traviata** es una obra maestra imperecedera; y aunque es trágica, es una celebración del amor y la capacidad humana para el sacrificio, el perdón y la empatía. Mi tiempo trabajando con este grupo de artistas y técnicos ha sido otro punto culminante de mi carrera, y espero que disfruten deleitándose con sus talentos extremos tanto como yo lo he hecho durante todo el proceso.

Para la próxima temporada –la número 30 de la compañía– estaré encantado de capitalizar la ocasión del aniversario para celebrar **al artista**. Estaremos de vuelta en el anfiteatro McKelligon Canyon con **Mozart by Moonlight**, un concierto tributo al aire libre a quizás el mejor compositor-artista de ópera que jamás haya conocido, seguido de la genial obra maestra de Broadway, **Sunday in the Park with George**, el estudio de Stephen Sondheim sobre lo que significa ser un artista. Espero continuar este viaje con (y para) ustedes.

### Justin Lucero

Artistic Director, & Stage Director of **La Traviata**



PRESENTS

VERDI

# LA TRAVIATA

AN OPERA IN THREE ACTS

JUNE 3, 2023 7:30 PM | ABRAHAM CHAVEZ THEATRE

**Role**

*Violetta Valéry*  
*Alfredo Germont*  
*Giorgio Germont*  
*Flora Bervoix*  
*Gastone de Letorières*  
*Dottore Grenvil*  
*Barone Douphol*  
*Marchese d'Obigny*  
*Annina*

**Artist**

Marlen Nahhas  
 David Portillo  
 Corey Crider  
 Cherry Duke  
 Brian Downen  
 Javier Ortiz  
 Phillip Hill  
 Mauricio Perusquia  
 Holly Kara Mesarch

**Underwriter**

J. Kirk & Judy Robison  
 Wilma Salzman  
 Robert & Sara Shiloff  
 Drs. Fay la Fon & Robert Postma  
 Stacey Hunt Spier & Peter Spier  
 Carr, Riggs & Ingram CPAs  
 Robert & Sara Shiloff  
 Helen Mott  
 Terry & Nancy Pasqualone

Conductor/Music Director

Jorge Parodi

Stage Director

Justin Lucero

Chorus Master

Dr. Elisa Fraser Wilson

Lighting Designer

Marissa Díaz

Asst. Director/Choreographer

Josey Pickett

Stage Manager

Chris Colbourn

Assistant Stage Manager

Malori Cade

Ann Ward

Rehearsal Pianist

Guillermo de la Garza

Costumer

Carlos de la Garza-Garcia

Assistant Costumer

L. Eddie Wilson

Make-up Designer

Ivan Cano

Wig Designer

Jaime Barba

Assistant Lighting Director

Maria Espinoza

Supertitles Creator

Antonio Motta

Bernice Williams

Supertitles Operator

Guillermo de la Garza

Lynn Provenzano

Stagehands & Crew

South Coast Audio

An original co-production of Opera Colorado and Boston Lyric Opera.  
 Scenery and props provided by Nashville Opera.

**La Traviata** has a running time of approximately  
 2 hours and 45 minutes including two 20-minute intermissions.

# LA TRAVIATA

## CHORUS & DANCERS

Members of our Chorus have been generously underwritten  
by Dr. Ariana Bender, Tom Brady, Jan Brady & Margie Melby

### SOPRANO

Selena F. Díaz  
Alexa Esparza  
Elisa Gomez  
Cristina Jones\*  
Ariah Labrado  
Abigail Talavera

### ALTO

Samantha N. Dávalos\*  
Priscilla Gandara  
Ivan Lopez  
Joselin Fernanda Mendoza H.  
Brisa Serrano  
Brittney Williams

### TENOR

Abner Astudillo†  
Antonio Motta\*\*†  
Erik Ortiz  
Paul de la Peña Franceschi  
Vinicius Juarez Vieira  
Benjamin E. Vincent

### BASS

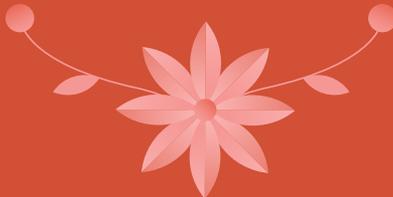
Maximillian Contreras  
Tom Lewis-Woot†  
Kevin Sandberg  
Robert Vega Jr.  
Dendre Wright

\*El Paso Opera Resident Artist

† Chorus feature

### DANCERS

Camila Hellmuth  
Saul Martinez  
Melissa Vera



# SYNOPSIS FOR LA TRAVIATA

## ACT I

A party is taking place at the lavish home of Violetta Valéry, the most famous courtesan in all of Paris. Gastone presents his friend, Alfredo Germont, telling Violetta that Alfredo has long been a silent admirer, calling every day during her illness to ask about her. Violetta's lover, the Baron Douphol, is angered by the conversation and refuses to propose a toast. Alfredo accepts the invitation and sings an impassioned tribute to beauty and love. As the others go to dance, Violetta is overcome by a coughing spell. Alfredo stays behind and confesses that he's been in love with her for a year. Violetta initially dismisses him but is touched by his sincerity and gives him a camellia, inviting him to return when the flower has withered. Alfredo joyously accepts and bids her goodnight. When her guests have gone, Violetta imagines Alfredo's proffered love—the one forbidden thing for any courtesan—but finally rejects it, declaring that she was meant to remain forever free to pass from pleasure to pleasure.

## ACT II

**Scene 1:** Violetta is living with Alfredo in the country, having abandoned her life as the most desired woman in Paris. Annina, Violetta's maid and confidante, tells Alfredo she's been sent to sell Violetta's property to pay their expenses. Alfredo suddenly understands Violetta's sacrifices and leaves determined to fix things. In an unexpected visit, Giorgio Germont, Alfredo's father, asks Violetta to give up Alfredo, explaining that their illegitimate relationship is threatened by scandal and endangering the impending marriage of Alfredo's younger sister. Germont finally convinces Violetta to leave Alfredo forever. Alfredo returns, and unaware his father has already arrived, explains to Violetta that Germont has written him a severe letter but he's sure he'll approve of her as soon as he meets her. Pretending to leave so as to give space for father and

son, Violetta departs and a messenger returns with her letter of farewell. Alfredo is stricken with grief at the loss of Violetta as Germont returns and tries to comfort his son. Finding a party invitation from Flora, Alfredo's worst nightmare that Violetta would go back to the Baron and her former life has come true.

**Scene 2:** Flora Bervoix is throwing a soirée with her lover, the Marquis, full of naughty entertainment for the aristocracy of Paris. Alfredo arrives as the guests are beginning to gamble, followed by Violetta, escorted by the Baron. Alfredo, victorious in gambling, explains that one who is unlucky in love is lucky at cards. When all the others go to dinner, Violetta remains behind to entreat Alfredo to leave lest the Baron challenge him to a duel. Alfredo answers that he'll leave, but only with her. Unable to reveal her true feelings, Violetta declares that she's in love with the Baron. Alfredo, in a frenzy of jealousy, calls all the guests into the room and in a rage, insultingly throws money at Violetta's feet, proclaiming that he's paid her in full. Germont enters just in time to see Alfredo's violent behavior and joins the others in condemning him for his conduct. The Baron assures Alfredo that he must answer for the insult on the field of honor.

## ACT III

Violetta's illness has brought her to the point of death. Her physician, Doctor Grenvil, examines her and tells Annina that she has but hours to live. Violetta reads a letter from the elder Germont, in which she learns that Alfredo had fled abroad after wounding the Baron in a duel. He now knows of the great sacrifice that Violetta made and is hurrying back to beg her forgiveness. Alfredo returns and the two are reunited at last. But it is too late. The lovers dream of resuming their life together, but fate tragically intervenes.



# SINOPSIS DE LA TRAVIATA

## ACT I

Una fiesta se celebra en la lujosa casa de Violetta Valéry, la cortesana más famosa de todo París. Gastone le presenta a su amigo, Alfredo Germont, diciéndole a Violetta que Alfredo ha sido durante mucho tiempo un admirador secreto, y que la visitaba todos los días durante su enfermedad para preguntar por ella. El amante de Violetta, el barón Douphol, está enojado por la conversación y se niega a proponer un brindis. Alfredo acepta la invitación y canta un apasionado homenaje a la belleza y el amor. Mientras los demás van a bailar, Violetta sufre un ataque de tos. Alfredo se queda atrás y le confiesa que lleva un año enamorado de ella. Violetta inicialmente lo rechaza, pero se conmueve por su sinceridad y le da una camelia, invitándolo a regresar cuando la flor se haya marchitado. Alfredo acepta con alegría y le da las buenas noches. Cuando sus invitados se han ido, Violetta imagina el amor ofrecido por Alfredo, lo único prohibido para cualquier cortesana, pero finalmente lo rechaza, declarando que está destinada a permanecer libre para siempre para pasar de un placer a otro.

## ACT II

**Escena 1:** Violetta vive con Alfredo en el campo, habiendo abandonado su vida como la mujer más deseada de París. Annina, la criada y confidente de Violetta, le dice a Alfredo que ha sido enviada a vender la propiedad de Violetta para pagar los gastos. Alfredo rápidamente comprende los sacrificios de Violetta y se va decidido a arreglar las cosas. En una visita inesperada, Giorgio Germont, el padre de Alfredo, le pide a Violetta que renuncie a Alfredo, explicando que su relación ilegítima está amenazada por el escándalo y poniendo en peligro el inminente matrimonio de la hermana menor de Alfredo. Germont finalmente convence a Violetta de que deje a Alfredo para siempre. Alfredo regresa y, sin saber que su padre ha llegado, le explica que Germont le ha escrito una carta severa pero que está seguro de que aprobará a Violetta en cuanto la conozca. Fingiendo irse para dejar espacio a padre e hijo,

Violetta se marcha y un mensajero regresa con su carta de despedida. Alfredo está afligido por la pérdida de Violetta cuando Germont regresa y trata de consolar a su hijo. Al encontrar una invitación para una fiesta de Flora, la peor pesadilla de Alfredo de que Violetta vuelva con el Barón a su vida anterior se ha hecho realidad.

**Escena 2:** Flora Bervoix está organizando una velada con su amante, el marqués, llena de pícaro entretenimiento para la aristocracia de París. Alfredo llega cuando los invitados empiezan a apostar, seguido de Violetta, escoltada por el Barón. Alfredo, vencedor del juego, explica que quien tiene mala suerte en el amor tiene buena suerte en las cartas. Cuando todos los demás van a cenar, Violetta se queda atrás para suplicarle a Alfredo que se vaya para que el barón no lo desafíe a duelo. Alfredo responde que se irá, pero solo con ella. Incapaz de revelar sus verdaderos sentimientos, Violetta declara que está enamorada del Barón. Alfredo, en un frenesí de celos, llama a todos los invitados y, enfurecido, lanza insultantemente dinero a los pies de Violetta, proclamando que le ha pagado en su totalidad. Germont entra justo a tiempo para ver el comportamiento violento de Alfredo y se une a los demás para condenarlo por su conducta. El Barón asegura a Alfredo que debe responder por el insulto en el campo de honor.

## ACT III

La enfermedad de Violetta la ha llevado al borde de la muerte. Su médico, el doctor Grenvil, la examina y le dice a Annina que solo le quedan unas horas de vida. Violetta lee una carta del anciano Germont, en la que se entera de que Alfredo ha huido al extranjero después de herir al barón en un duelo. Germont ahora sabe del gran sacrificio que hizo Violetta y se apresura a volver para pedirle perdón. Alfredo regresa y los dos se reencuentran por fin. Pero es demasiado tarde. Los amantes sueñan con reanudar su vida juntos, pero el destino interviene trágicamente.



THANK YOU



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OPERA

## ARTISTS



# MARLEN NAHHAS

VIOLETTA VALÉRY



Marlen Nahhas, Mexican-Lebanese soprano, makes her debut with El Paso Opera in ***La Traviata*** (Violetta). Recent appearances include debuts at Opera Ithaca for ***Hänsel and Gretel*** (Gretel) and Virginia Opera in ***La bohème*** (Musetta), a role she has performed with Opera Naples and Finger Lakes Opera, Detroit Opera for ***Frida*** (Cristina Kahlo) and ***La bohème*** (Mimi), Cincinnati Opera for ***La bohème*** (Mimi cover) and ***Pirates of Penzance*** (Edith), and Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival for ***Le nozze di Figaro*** (Contessa cover). Ms. Nahhas recently completed the Cafritz Young Artists program with Washington National Opera and was seen in ***The Magic Flute*** (Pamina), ***La Traviata*** (Violetta) directed by Francesca Zambello, Tesori's ***The Lion, The Unicorn and Me*** (Flamingo), ***The Consul*** (Foreign Woman), the world premiere of Sankaram's ***Taking Up Serpents*** (Queer Kid), and a Concert of Comedic Masterpieces under the baton of Maestro Joseph Coloneri.

Ms. Nahhas was also an Apprentice Artist at The Santa Fe Opera where she covered in ***Le nozze di Figaro*** (Countess). Orchestral credits include the National Symphony Orchestra in excerpts from ***La bohème*** (Mimi) conducted by NSO music director Maestro Gianandrea Noseda and Kansas City Symphony for excerpts from ***Le nozze di Figaro*** (Susanna). Ms. Nahhas was a member of the Merola Opera program at the San Francisco Opera Center where she performed scenes from ***Il tabarro***, ***Don Giovanni***, ***Don Carlo***, and ***La rondine*** in the Schwabacher and Grand Finale concerts. She was also an Apprentice Artist with Central City Opera where she covered roles in ***Tosca*** and ***Così fan tutte*** (Fiordiligi). Additional performing experience includes ***Madama Butterfly*** and ***Die Fledermaus*** (Rosalinde). Ms. Nahhas was a National Semi-Finalist in The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and a graduate of Oklahoma City University and Indiana University.

## ARTISTS

## DAVID PORTILLO

ALFREDO GERMONT

David Portillo, American tenor, is praised by Opera News for “high notes with ease, singing with a luxuriant warm glow that seduced the ear as he bounded about the stage with abandon.” Mr. Portillo has established himself as a leading classical singer of his generation. In the 2021-2022 season, he performed Lurciana in **Ariodante** with the Palau des les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia, Spain and Lysander in **A Midsummer Night’s Dream** with Opéra de Lille and Tamino in **Die Zauberflöte** with Pittsburgh Opera. A wonderful recitalist, Mr.

Portillo has collaborated with pianist Craig Terry for appearances with Vocal Arts DC and the Cleveland Art Song Festival. Projects for 2022-2023 include Tamino in **The Magic Flute** at the Metropolitan Opera, Ferrando in **Così fan tutte** with The Dallas Opera, Nadir in **The Pearl Fishers** with Austin Opera and Don Ottavio in **Don Giovanni** in Osaka, Japan. He will also present a recital as part of the Source Song Festival in Minneapolis, and perform Britten’s Serenade and select Mozart arias with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.



## ARTISTS

COREY  
CRIDER

GIORGIO GERMONT



Corey Crider, Baritone. Celebrated in the leading dramatic and classic music theatre roles, baritone Corey Crider's 2022-2023 season includes this El Paso Opera debut as Germont in ***La Traviata***, Alfio in ***Cavalleria Rusticana*** with Toledo Opera and a return to Paducah Symphony Orchestra as featured soloist in their holiday concert. Mr. Crider recently joined the roster of The Metropolitan Opera for their production of ***Don Carlos***. Last season, the baritone also performed his lauded Scarpia in ***Tosca*** with Gulfshore Opera, and appeared as soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with Evansville

Philharmonic. In the 2019-2020 season, Corey returned to Opera Roanoke as Tonio in ***Pagliacci***, to The Dallas Opera as Prince Affron in ***The Golden Cockerel***, and was slated to debut with Manitoba Opera in his signature role, ***Sweeney Todd*** (COVID-19 cancellation). The 2018-2019 season saw him as Dancaïro in ***Carmen*** with The Dallas Opera, the Captain in ***Florenzia en el Amazonas*** with Pensacola Opera, Germont in ***La Traviata*** with Opera on the James, and Lancelot in ***Camelot*** with Charlottesville Opera.



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## ARTISTS

## CHERRY DUKE

FLORA BERVOIX

Cherry Duke, mezzo-soprano, has performed over 50 principal roles with opera companies and orchestras throughout the US and abroad, including the world premiere, tour, and original cast album of the acclaimed 2012 opera, ***Dog Days***. Recently, Duke was a soloist with the El Paso Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of the El Paso Requiem, and played Julia Child in ***Bon Appétit!*** with El Paso Opera. As an Artistic Associate with El Paso Opera, she served as Assistant Stage Director for EPO's

production of Robert Xavier Rodríguez's opera ***Frida***. Recently, Duke was selected to present her solo recital of songs by African American and African diaspora composers at the Texoma Regional Conference of the National Association of Teachers of Singing and the Sam Houston State University Art Song Festival. Cherry Duke has served as a member of the voice faculty and the Director of Opera at the University of Texas at El Paso since 2015. For more information, visit [www.cherryduke.com](http://www.cherryduke.com).



## ARTISTS

# BRIAN DOWNEN

GASTONE DE LETORIÈRES



Brian Downen, Tenor and Associate Professor of Voice at the University of Texas at El Paso, has sung leading roles in more than 70 productions for opera houses worldwide. Mr. Downen is known for his portrayals of leading men in the bel canto operas of Mozart and Rossini including numerous productions of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Don Giovanni* and *Die Zauberflöte*.

He made his debut at The Metropolitan Opera in 2016 in Roberto Devereux and has since returned as Triquet in *Eugene*

*Oegin* and as understudy for the four servants in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*. Recent engagements include the New York City premieres of Hasse's *Piramo e Tisbe* and Britten's *Owen Wingrave* with Little Opera Theatre of New York; Tamino in *The Magic Flute* and Beppe in *Pagliacci* with El Paso Opera. Upcoming engagements include *Il Re Pastore* with Little Opera Theatre of New York, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with El Paso Symphony Orchestra and Brahms's Liebeslieder Walzer with Market Square Concerts in Harrisburg, PA.



## ARTISTS



# JAVIER ORTIZ

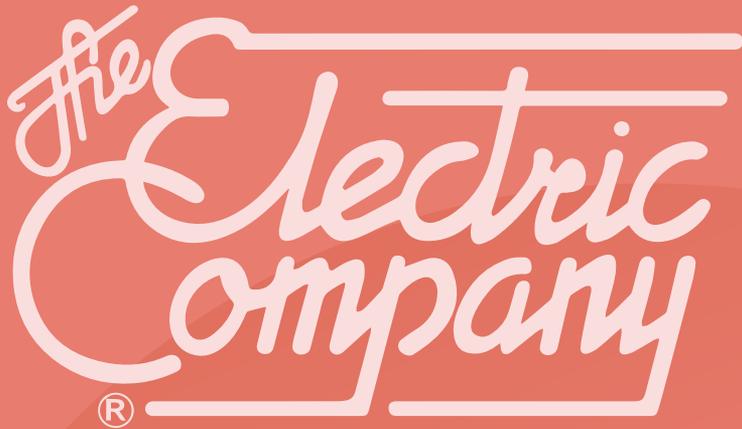
DOTTORE GRENVIL

Javier, bass-baritone, has sung “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, performed 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 played 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, Mr. Ortiz appeared as Gomez in **Zorro** with Opera Southwest, Man #2 in **Frida** with El Paso Opera, Figaro in **Le nozze di Figaro** with The Roswell Symphony, and Aeneas in **Dido and Aeneas** with the American Baroque Opera Company.



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## ARTISTS

## PHILLIP D. HILL

BARON DOUPHOL

Baritone Phillip D. Hill is on the voice faculty of the University of Texas at El Paso where he teaches applied voice and other voice related classes. Dr. Hill holds a DMA and MM degree in voice performance from the University of Texas at Austin and a BA degree in voice performance from Mississippi College. His career includes international performances of operatic and oratorio roles and extensive teaching experience at the university level. He has had the pleasure of singing a master class under Leontyne Price and won the 2007 Austin Critics Table Award for Outstanding Classical Singer. Some of his solo credits

include baritone soloist in Delius' Appalachia, under the direction of Gunther Schuller, bass soloist in Garcia's Missa de Nossa Senhora da Conceição, Count Almaviva in Mozart's ***The Marriage of Figaro***, L'Ami in Debussy's ***Fall of the House of Usher***, Falstaff in Getty's ***Plump Jack***, Papageno in Mozart's ***The Magic Flute***, Olin Blich in Floyd's ***Susannah***, baritone soloist in Orff's Carmina Burana, baritone soloist in Handel's Messiah, as well as numerous bass and baritone solos in Bach's cantatas. You may have also seen him in Opera UTEP's production of ***Luisa Fernanda*** as Vidal Hernandez.





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## ARTISTS



# MAURICIO PERUSQUIA

MARCHESE D'OBIGNY

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 schools

in the Phoenix area. He has also participated in the #CurbsideOpera initiative as a Resident Artist with El Paso Opera. He has engaged in many new works such as El Paso Opera's ***Frida***, Arizona Opera's ***Silent Night*** and the New Works reading of the jazz interactive opera, ***Marie Begins***.



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## ARTISTS

# HOLLY KARA MESARCH



Holly Kara Mesarch, Soprano, holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance. She is a first place winner at regional NATS competitions, recipient of the NATS Rio Grande chapter's "Most Promising Singer" award, and runner-up in Brigham Young University's Singer of the Year competition. Solos she has performed include soprano soloist for Handel's *Messiah*. Characters she has played include Susanna from *Le nozze di Figaro*, Despina from *Così fan tutte*, and Adele from *Die Fledermaus*. She is a Chamber

Choir singer in El Paso Choral Society under the direction of Prentice Loftin, a Resident Artist for El Paso Opera under the direction of Justin Lucero, and the director/choral director for El Paso's community presentation of Handel's *Messiah*. She continues to teach, give recitals and appear as a guest soloist with choirs and local churches. Holly Kara Mesarch lives to share her lifelong passion for music through performance and working as Assistant to the Director of El Paso Opera—all while balancing a busy family life with her husband and five sons.



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# JORGE PARODI

## MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR



Internationally acclaimed, Maestro Parodi has worked extensively in North America, Latin America, Europe, and Asia. Reviewed as having “the most expressive conducting hands since Stokowski” by the New York Daily News, Argentinean-born Jorge Parodi has worked with such companies as the Teatro Colón in Argentina, the Volgograd Opera in Russia, the Encuentros Internacionales de Opera in Mexico, the Tokyo International Vocal Arts Academy in Japan, and the International Vocal Arts Institute in Israel. He has collaborated with such artists as Isabel Leonard, Eglise Gutiérrez, Tito Capobianco, Sherrill Milnes, Aprile Millo, and Rufus Wainwright and has assisted conductors Lorin Maazel and Julius Rudel, among others. Recently, Maestro Parodi was appointed General and Artistic Director of Opera Hispánica, the only company in the United States focused on the Hispanic vocal repertoire and on the Latino perspective. Maestro Parodi also conducted historically informed performances of Cavalli’s *La Calisto* and Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, and a concert performance of Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* at the Bruno Walter Auditorium in Lincoln Center. Mr. Parodi has been a faculty member at The Juilliard School for over a decade and is Vocal Coach of the premier Juilliard School’s Pre-College Division. He has been recently appointed Music Director of the International Summer Opera Festival of Morelia (Mexico), and he is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Tokyo International Vocal Arts Academy Summer Workshop. Some of his credits include *Carmen*, *Les pêcheurs de perles*, *Il barbiere di*

*Siviglia*, *Les contes d’Hoffmann* and *Le nozze di Figaro* for Opera Tampa; Piazzolla’s *María de Buenos Aires* for New York City Opera, The Atlanta Opera, Opera Hispánica and Opera Grand Rapids; Rodríguez’ *Frida* for The Atlanta Opera; Lucrezia Borgia and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* for Buenos Aires Lírica (Argentina); *The Turn of the Screw* for the Castleton Festival in Virginia and *The Banff Centre* (Canada); *Roméo et Juliette*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Traviata*, *Pagliacci* and *Faust* for Savannah Opera; *Les contes d’Hoffmann* and *Die Fledermaus* for Opera Orlando; *¡Figaro!(90210)* for Chautauqua Opera; and *L’enfant et les sortilèges* for The Juilliard School. He led the world premières of Anton Coppola’s *Lady Swanwhite* for Opera Tampa, Michael Ching’s *The Birthday Clown* for Savannah Opera; and John Musto’s *Rhoda and the Fossil Hunt* in a coproduction of On Site Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago Lyric’s Unlimited and Pittsburgh Opera. Last season he made his debut at Amarillo Opera for their Opera Gala; at Gulfshore Opera with *Tosca*; and at the Merola Program of the San Francisco Opera conducting the Schwabacher Summer Concert. This season he makes his debut at New Orleans Opera with *Charlie Parker: Yardbird* and here at El Paso Opera with *La Traviata*; and he returns to Tampa for *Norma*, Amarillo for *Rigoletto*; Gulfshore Opera for *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Don Giovanni*; and Williamsburg for *La bohème* and *Don Giovanni*.

## ARTISTS

JUSTIN  
LUCERO

## STAGE DIRECTOR

Justin Lucero (he/him/his), stage director and Artistic Director, 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 Chair. 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 prestigious engagements such as 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 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, as well as a member of TCG's board-level governance in the inaugural Next Generation Taskforce. He also served as a Blue Ribbon Panel selecting this year's Tony Award winner for Excellence in Theatre Education, and continues to be a grants evaluator for the Texas Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Mr. Lucero has just completed 12 seasons of affiliation with El Paso Opera for which he has produced and stage directed such productions as *Frida*, *Bon Appétit!*, *Pagliacci*, *The Magic Flute*, *Trouble in Tahiti*, and *Hänsel & Gretel*. Recent directing engagements include Abingdon Theatre Company (NY), Kane Repertory Theatre (Chicago), Live & In Color (NY), City Theatre (Pittsburgh), Pittsburgh Festival Opera, Pittsburgh Playhouse/Point Park University, and the University of Texas at El Paso with this year's *Zoot Suit*. 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: [justinlucero-director.com](http://justinlucero-director.com)

## ARTISTS

## MARISSA DÍAZ

## LIGHTING DESIGNER

Marissa Díaz is a proud native El Pasoan who has an MFA in Drama from UC Irvine and a BFA from UTEP in Theatre. Díaz has worked with lighting for theatre, dance, and architecture and is thrilled to be creating art again here at home. Recent credits include

*Heroes and Saints* with the UTEP Department of Theatre and Dance and *Frida* with El Paso Opera. She thanks Adrian and her family for all their love and support.

[www.madlightingdesign.com](http://www.madlightingdesign.com)

## THE CREATORS

In a remarkable career spanning six decades in the theater, Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) composed 26 operas, at least half of which are at the core of today's repertoire. His role in Italy's cultural and political development has made him an icon in his native country. Francesco Maria Piave (1810–76), Verdi's librettist for *La Traviata*, collaborated with him on ten works, including *Ernani*,

*Rigoletto*, *La Forza del Destino*, and the original versions of *Macbeth* and Simon Boccanegra. Alexandre Dumas fils (1824–95) was the son of the author of *The Three Musketeers*. His play *La Dame aux Camélias* (*The Lady of the Camellias*), which Verdi adapted into *La Traviata*, is based on Dumas's own semi-autobiographical novel of the same name.  
(from *The Metropolitan Opera*)



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# ORCHESTRA

## El Paso Symphony Orchestra

Members of our orchestra have been generously underwritten by Gloria Lavis (\*) and Kathleen Condon.

### Violin

Brigid McCarthy, Concertmaster\*  
Cristina Leony, Associate Concertmaster\*  
Vanessa Cedillos, Assistant Concertmaster  
Stephen Nordstrom  
Jasmine Gomez  
Diana Gilliland

### Violin II

Amalia Zeitlin, Principal  
Roberto Jurado, Assistant Principal  
LeAnn Isaac  
Elizabeth Zamora  
Shelly Wood

### Viola

Susan Hernandez, Principal  
Mara Arredondo, Assistant Principal  
Monica Arredondo  
Jessica Lane

### Cello

James Carney, Principal  
Jorge Espinoza, Assistant Principal  
Michael Way

### Bass

Ian Narlock, Principal  
Robert Taylor, Assistant Principal

### Flute

Joy Zalkind, Principal  
Jesus Candela

### Oboe

Holly Dalager, Principal  
Kevin Lett

### Clarinet

Jim Logan, Principal  
Corey Tamez

### Bassoon

Cara Luffey, Principal  
Russell Smith

### Horn

John Groves, Principal  
Nancy Joy  
Celeste Shearer, Assistant Principal  
Kristen Major

### Trumpet

Kenneth Capshaw, Principal  
Paul McLaughlin

### Trombone

Sander Schiller, Principal  
Jan Zubeck  
John Feeny

### Tuba

Clint Sims, Principal

### Timpani

Larry White, Principal

### Percussion

Leandro Valenzuela, Principal  
Deborah Eichholz Lain

### Harp

Emily Mitchell

## Special Thanks to

Steve Wilson & UTEP Department of Music  
Cherry Duke & Opera UTEP  
Ruth Ellen Jacobson  
Mike & Claudia White  
Gregory L. Taylor & The UTEP Dinner Theatre  
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David Portillo as Alfredo Germont .....	Wilma Salzman
Marlen Nahhas as Violetta Valéry .....	J. Kirk & Judy Robison
Corey Crider as Giorgio Germont .....	Robert & Sarah Shiloff
Cherry Duke as Flora Bervoix .....	Drs. Fay La Fon & Robert Postma
Brian Downen as Gastone de Letorières .....	Stacey Hunt Spier & Peter Spier
Javier Ortiz as Dottore Grenvil .....	Carr, Riggs & Ingram, CPAs & Advisors
Phillip D. Hill as Baron Douphol .....	Robert & Sara Shiloff
Mauricio Perusquia as Marchese .....	Helen Mott
Holly Kara Mesarch as Annina .....	Terry & Nancy Pasqualone
Malori Cade, Assistant Stage Manager .....	Ann Ward
Antonio Motta, Production Assistant .....	Bernice Williams
Chorus Member .....	Dr. Ariana Bender
Chorus Member .....	Margie Melby
(2) Chorus Members .....	Jan & Tom Brady
EPSO Concertmaster Brigid McCarthy .....	Gloria Lavis
EPSO Asst. Concertmaster Cristina Leony .....	Gloria Lavis
EPSO Member .....	Kathleen Condon
Guillermo de la Garza, Principal Pianist .....	Kitty Schild
Holly Mesarch, Resident Artist .....	Dr. David Pritchard
Taelon Stonecipher, Resident Artist .....	Marshall Carter-Tripp & Richard Tripp
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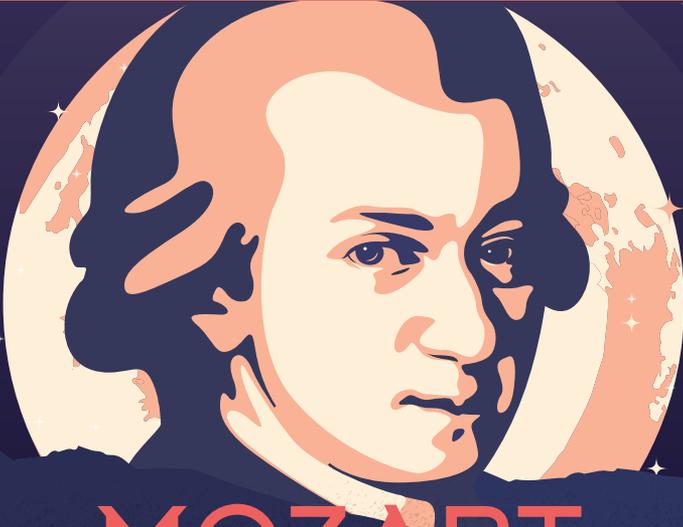
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