

OPERA SAN JOSÉ PRESENTS
ROLICKING NEW PRODUCTION OF
ROSSINI'S COMEDY

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

November 11–26, 2023

SAN JOSE, CA (6 October 2023) — **Opera San José** will continue its 40th anniversary season with an upbeat comedy for operagoers of all ages with Gioachino Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, in a new production by internationally acclaimed director **Stephen Lawless**, making his Opera San José debut. Subtitled "The Useless Precaution," this opera buffa introduces the rascalion barber Figaro (**Ricardo José Rivera**) who uses all his wiles to assist the love-struck Count Almaviva (**Joshua Sanders**) in liberating his true love Rosina (**Nikola Adele Printz**) from the clutches of her guardian, Dr. Bartolo (**Dale Travis**). Conducted by OSJ Director of Music **Joseph Marcheso**, this comic masterpiece fizzing with entertaining hijinks and memorable melodies will play at the historic California Theatre in downtown San Jose for six performances. Filled with incomparable Italian music, a story featuring matchmaking, mistaken identities, and love at first sight, *The Barber of Seville* will be sung in Italian with English and Spanish supertitles, **November 11-26, 2023** (performance dates/times below, including an added family-friendly matinee) at the **California Theatre**, 345 South First Street, San Jose. For more information or to purchase tickets (\$55–\$195), the public can visit operasj.org or call **408-437-4450** (open Monday through Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm).

"This classic comedy features some of the most iconic music in the world and has introduced millions of people of all ages to the joy and depth of opera, yet it remains a perennial favorite for the seasoned operagoer," said Opera San José General Director / CEO Shawna Lucey. "The story of the barber Figaro, and his schemes in smoothing the course of true love, returns with a splendid ensemble cast and whimsical production. This is an appointment with the barber you don't want to miss."

The vibrant cast of talented singers also includes **Courtney Miller** as Berta, **Vartan Gabrielian** as Basilio, **Joshua Hughes** as Fiorello and **Michael Kuo** as Officer. The chorus is comprised of **Carter Dougherty, Andrew Fellows, Andrew Green, Glen Hall, Michael Kim, Eric Mellum, Michael Mendelsohn, Joshua Porter, and Nicolas Vasquez-Gerst.**

The creative team for this production is **Joseph Marcheso** (Conductor), **Stephen Lawless** (Director), **Adrian Linford** (Scenic Designer and Costume Designer), **Thomas Hase** (Lighting Designer), **Y. Sharon Peng** (Hair and Makeup Design), **Johannes Löhner** (Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master), and **Michelle Ainna Cuizon** (Assistant Director).

The Barber of Seville is considered to be one of the greatest works of comedy within music. The two-act opera was composed by Gioachino Rossini with an Italian libretto by Cesare Sterbini, based on Pierre Beaumarchais's French 1775 comedy *The Barber of Seville*. Rossini's opera premiered under the original title *Almaviva, o sia L'inutile precauzione* on February 20, 1816, at the Teatro Argentina in Rome. Set in 18th century Seville, Spain the opera follows a cunning jack-of-all-trades Figaro who is tapped by the lovestruck Count Almaviva to woo the ward of Dr. Bartolo, Rosina. Hijinks and disguises ensue as a poor student, a drunken soldier, and even a music teacher vie for Rosina's attention and heart.

There will be two special opportunities to participate in this presentation of ***The Barber of Seville*** with Opera San José. "Classically Curious" night will be held **Friday, November 17**, bringing together people ages 21-40 who have a passion for deepening their involvement with opera. This young professionals program was created to introduce new audiences to opera, offering access to discounted tickets, exclusive behind-the-scenes opportunities, and social and community events that will connect young adult opera lovers. The matinee on **Saturday, November 25** is designated a family-friendly performance to expose even younger operagoers to this high energy comedy. The family-friendly performance includes a pre-show music lesson at 1pm and offers youth "Pay Your Own Age" prices for youngest audience members (minimum \$5 per ticket, must be purchased with a regularly priced adult ticket).

Artist Bios:

Ricardo José Rivera (Figaro)

Puerto Rican baritone **Ricardo José Rivera** is a 2021 alumnus of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Ricardo has performed with Washington Concert Opera, Sarasota Opera, Opera San Antonio, Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Riccardo Muti, CulturArte de Puerto Rico, Houston Grand Opera, Opera de Puerto Rico, and concerts with the Mobile Symphony. This season he makes his debut as Figaro in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and later as Riolo in *Florenzia en el Amazonas* with Opera San José, and he debuts the role of Miller in *Luisa Miller* with Sarasota Opera. For the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Rivera sang Schaunard in *La bohème*, Baron Douphol in *La traviata*, and Sharpless in *Madame Butterfly*. Recent engagements include Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Aspen Music Festival, Claudio in Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict* and Angel #7 in the American premiere of contemporary opera *Seven Angels* by Luke Bedford, both with the Aspen Music Festival, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* with the International Lyric Academy of Rome, and Silvano in *Un ballo in maschera* with Opera in the Heights. In concert, he has performed with the Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago, Civic Orchestra at the Chicago Symphony Center, Dominican Republic Symphony Orchestra, and in several concerts with the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra. Also, in his native Puerto Rico he has performed with the Opera de Puerto Rico, Teatro de la Ópera, Ópera al Fresco and the Zarzuela and Operetta Foundation. In 2016, he portrayed the role of Don Quixote in Manuel de Falla's *Master Peter's Puppet Show*, as part of the prestigious Festival Casals. Rivera has been the recipient of several grants, including

the Richard F. Gold Career Grant presented by the Shoshana Foundation, First Prize and Audience Prize winner in the Houston Saengerbund Voice Competition, and Third Prize winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions – Gulf Region.

Joshua Sanders (Count Almaviva)

Tenor and 2023-24 Opera San José Artist-in-Residence **Joshua Sanders** made his company debut in this season's *Romeo and Juliet*. Later this season, he will also cover Don Ramiro in Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and will make his debut at Nashville Opera as Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. During the 2022-23 season, Sanders joined the roster of the Metropolitan Opera for Robert Carsen's *Der Rosenkavalier* and debuted as Goro in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* with Palm Beach Opera, where he also covered Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. In 2017, Sanders made his international debut at Teatro Regio Torino as Der Hirte in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, conducted by Gianandrea Noseda. In concert, he made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2019 as a soloist in Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*. Sanders has appeared as a guest soloist with the New Jersey Symphony as the titular character in Berlioz's *Lélio, ou Le retour à la vie*, and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Lee Mingwei's Sonic Blossom Exhibit, featuring the music of Schubert. He has also performed at New York City's iconic Public Theater in a cabaret curated by Justin Vivian Bond for New York State's "NY PopsUp" concert series.

Nikola Adele Printz (Rosina)

Artistically fluid mezzo **Nikola Adele Printz** returns to Opera San José, where they appeared in critically acclaimed performances in the title role of *Carmen*, and as Dido in *Dido and Aeneas*. Printz's Schwabacher Debut Recital at San Francisco Opera was declared by *San Francisco Chronicle* as one of "San Francisco's Best of 2022," writing, "listeners reveled in the beauty of Printz's singing – their lustrously dark chest tones, their elegant phrasing... such commitment and tonal splendor." Following two pandemic-era summers as a participant in the prestigious Merola Opera Program, Printz began their tenure as an Adler Fellow with San Francisco Opera in 2023. During SFO's centennial season, Printz covered Frida in the world premiere of Gabriela Lea Frank's *El último sueño de Frida y Diego* as well as singing Imagen #2 and performed Musetta in *Bohème Out of the Box*. Performance highlights include , appearing in *L'italiana in Algeri* with Opera Memphis, *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* with Pocket Opera, *Ermelinda* with Ars Minerva, *Orfeo ed Eurydice* with West Edge Opera, and as Lucretia in *The Rape of Lucretia* with Green Mountain Opera Festival. They have also appeared as Elle in *La voix humaine*, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, The Fox in *Cunning Little Vixen*, Olga in *Eugene Onegin*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*. Printz's first musical homes were in jazz and cabaret clubs, and they are well-versed in crossover styles of singing. In addition to engagements at Yoshi's Jazz Lounge and Club 1923, Nikola also created the role of Velma Louise Cole in Boxcar Theater's immersive Speakeasy SF and joined San Francisco Symphony for their annual queer variety show *Holiday Gaiety*. An accomplished aerialist, Printz has also developed and performed on spinning trapeze in both grand concert halls and smoky cabaret clubs.

Dale Travis (Bartolo)

Dale Travis is one of the most sought-after bass-baritones in America today. With a repertoire encompassing 50 roles in a wide variety of styles from Mozart, Donizetti, and Rossini to Strauss, Puccini, and Wagner, Travis has been a frequent guest artist at the most prestigious opera companies in the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Washington Opera, Los Angeles, Santa Fe Opera Festival, Opera Colorado, Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera, Dallas Opera, Opera San José, Glimmerglass Opera, Virginia Opera, Atlanta Opera, Minnesota Opera, Opera Colorado, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Spoleto Festival USA, the Saito Kinen Music Festival, Teatro Regio in Torino, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, the Berlin Komische Oper, the New Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv, the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy in Japan, and Teatro dell' Opera in Rome. He returned to the San Francisco Opera as the Marquis de la Force in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* in 2022 and was presented the San Francisco Opera Medal for 34 years of exemplary artistic servitude with the company. His work in dramatic and contemporary repertoire is widely praised as well with wonderfully detailed portrayals in the works of Britten, Berg, Poulenc, Weill, Stravinsky, and Janacek. Travis can be heard on EMI Classics with the Metropolitan Opera's *Manon Lescaut* HD DVD, the EMI Classic CD of *Die Burgschaft* at the Spoleto Festival USA, Albany Records CD of Todd Machover's *Resurrection* with the Houston Grand Opera, and on London Records in *Capriccio* with the San Francisco Opera.

Courtney Miller (Berta)

Praised by *Opera News* for her "fluent musicality," and applauded for her captivating stage presence and excellent sense of comic timing, mezzo-soprano **Courtney Miller** made her company debut in *Romeo and Juliet* with Opera San José, where she will serve as an Artist-in-Residence for the 2023-24 season. Earlier in 2023, Miller debuted with Pocket Opera as Nancy in Britten's *Albert Herring* and was a fellow of the Somatic Songs with 3340 Recitals. Her new art song recital, *Tell me the truth about love*, will tour in 2024. Career highlights include Sister St. Charles in Francis Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (San Francisco Opera), Hannah in Mieczysław Weinberg's *The Passenger* (Detroit Opera), Olga in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* (Florida Grand Opera), Meg in Mark Adamo's *Little Women* (Madison Opera), and Cherubino in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (Opera Saratoga).

Vartan Gabrielian (Basilio)

Bass-baritone and Opera San José Artist-in-Residence **Vartan Gabrielian**'s 2023-24 season marks numerous role and house debuts – most recently his company debut with Opera San José in *Romeo and Juliet*. Later this season, Gabrielian will make a festival debut as Nick Shadow (Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*) at the Verbier Festival, a house debut as Dottore Grenvil (Verdi's *La traviata*) at the Paris Opera and will appear as Fasolt (Wagner's *Das Rheingold*) at Edmonton Opera. A sought-after concert performer, Gabrielian will also be performing Handel's *Messiah* with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra at the end of 2023. Highlights from the 2022-23 season include Masetto and Commendatore (Mozart's *Don Giovanni*) at the National Arts Centre, Nourabad (Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles*) at the Vancouver Opera, and a return to the

Canadian Opera Company to perform Dottore (Verdi's *Macbeth*) and cover Figaro (Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), and Angelotti (Verdi's *Tosca*).

Joshua Hughes (Fiorello)

Joshua Hughes, lauded for his "full-voiced, highly expressive, bass-baritone pipes," (*Theatre Eddys*) "powerful lyricism" (*Texas Classical Review*), and "brilliant vocal range" (*DC Metro Theater Arts*), has performed in opera, operetta, theatre, cabarets, and concerts ranging from Gilbert and Sullivan to Mozart to Shakespeare. The "lush, rich baritone" (*TheatreBloom*), approaches a wide variety of roles with a "power and dramatic effect" (*Dallas Morning News*) that immediately connect the audience to the story at hand. Hughes's gift for honest communication and his extensive training in music, acting, language, and dance aid him in providing engaging and entertaining performances. Hughes's upcoming season includes his return to Opera San José and a house debut in the chorus of Verdi's *Il trovatore* with San Francisco Opera. He opened this season with Lamplighters Music Theatre in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* with performances in Mountain View, San Francisco, Livermore. He also made his company debut with West Bay Opera Verdi's *La traviata*, in *Don Giovanni*, and as Daland in Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*. He's performed with Lyric Stage, Opera in Concert, Young Victorian Theatre Company, Victorian Lyric Opera Company, Soli Deo Gloria, San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Orchestra of New Spain, American Baroque Opera Company, Dallas Bach Society, Air Opera Collective, Dallas Opera, Lyric Opera Baltimore, Peabody Opera, Bay Music Festival, Opera in the Ozarks, Bethesda Summer Music Festival.

Michael Kuo (Officer)

Michael Kuo returns to Opera San José where he has appeared in past productions including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Tosca*, and *West Side Story*. He has also appeared with San Francisco Opera, Cinnabar Theatre, and others. Kuo received his Bachelor's of Science in Music at Pacific Union College in 2015 and his Master's degree in Vocal Performance at San Jose State University in 2017, studying under Sandra Bengochea. He has been studying piano since he was 10 and singing since he was 16. He first started teaching music in his senior year in college in 2014. Since then, he has taught piano and voice at several music schools including Pacific Music Academy and Willow Glen Music School.

Joseph Marcheso (Conductor)

Joseph Marcheso, Music Director and Principal Conductor of Opera San José, was most recently seen conducting OSJ's production of *Romeo and Juliet* this season. He has conducted more than 25 productions for OSJ, including the company premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *Moby Dick*, the West Coast premiere of Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell's *Silent Night*, and the world premiere of Mark Weiser's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, among others. As staff conductor and cover at San Francisco Opera, Marcheso has served on many productions, including the San Francisco premiere of John Adams's *Nixon in China*, the world premiere of Mark Adamo's *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, and Heggie and Scheer's *It's a Wonderful Life* (cover). Prior to joining OSJ, Marcheso was on the conducting staff for Washington National Opera's *Manon Lescaut* and served as the Music Director for the Amato Opera in New York City.

Stephen Lawless (Director)

British director **Stephen Lawless** makes his debut with Opera San José with this production. The internationally acclaimed director may be best known to Bay Area audiences for his landmark San Francisco Opera production of Roberto *Devereux*, hailed by critics as “the most thrilling one-two punch of a season opener in many a long year. There’s no going back.” (*San Francisco Chronicle*) and “A breathtaking evening. A rare treat for opera-goers.” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*). Lawless has directed throughout the world including at the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne Festival, Vienna State Opera, La Fenice in Venice, the Berlin State Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, Washington National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, New York City Opera, LA Opera, San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera, Scottish Opera, and the complete *Der Ring des Nibelungen* for the Nurnberg Opera. He was director of production for the Glyndebourne Touring Opera from 1986 to 1991, where his work culminated in an immensely successful production of *Death in Venice*, which was subsequently recorded by the BBC for television and video release and revived at the 1992 Glyndebourne Festival. He made his debut with the Kirov Opera in Leningrad producing a *Boris Godunov* that was broadcast live on British television, the first-ever live telecast of an opera from the Soviet Union to the U.K.

Opera San José (OSJ) is a flagship arts organization of Silicon Valley. Maintaining a resident company of artists, OSJ presents four mainstage productions annually in San José’s beautifully restored, magnificent California Theatre. It also regularly broadcasts fully produced productions from its state-of-the-art Heiman Digital Media Studio. OSJ specializes in role debuts, serving as an artistic incubator for established and emerging artists and administrators, producing world-class operatic performances for diverse audiences throughout the Bay Area and around the globe. More information is available at operasj.org.

The California Theatre is one of the most magnificent, best-preserved examples of 1920s-era lavish motion picture palaces. Lovingly restored at the turn of the 21st century, its opulently ornamented interiors were completely refurbished, including the elaborately stenciled entry foyer ceiling and magnificent gallery. With only twenty rows of seats in the orchestra section, five rows in the grand tier, and six in the mezzanine, every seat has an excellent view of the stage. With just over 1,100 seats, The California is comparable to England’s Glyndebourne and Venice’s historic Teatro la Fenice and is in the select ranks of the world’s most intimate opera houses.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **Opera San José** will continue its 40th anniversary season with an upbeat comedy for operagoers of all ages with Gioachino Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*, in a new production by internationally acclaimed director **Stephen Lawless** making his Opera San José debut. Subtitled “The Useless Precaution,” this opera buffa introduces the rascalion barber Figaro (**Ricardo José Rivera**) who uses all his

wiles to assist the love-struck Count Almaviva (**Joshua Sanders**) in liberating his true love Rosina (**Nikola Adele Printz**) from the clutches of her guardian, Dr. Bartolo (**Dale Travis**). Conducted by OSJ Director of Music **Joseph Marcheso**, this comic masterpiece fizzing with entertaining hijinks and memorable melodies will play at the historic California Theatre in downtown San Jose for six performances. Filled with incomparable Italian music, a story featuring matchmaking, mistaken identities, and love at first sight, ***The Barber of Seville*** will be sung in Italian with English and Spanish supertitles. Special nights include “Classically Curious” young professionals night (Nov. 17) and a family-friendly matinee (Nov 25) with a special “Pay-Your-Age” youth pricing and a preshow music lesson.

WHEN: 7:30pm, Saturday, November 11 – opening night
2:00pm, Sunday, November 12
7:30pm, Friday, November 17 – “Classically Curious” night
2:00pm, Sunday, November 19
2:00pm, Saturday, November 25 – family-friendly performance
2:00pm, Sunday, November 26

WHERE: **California Theatre**, 345 South First St., San Jose, CA

TICKETS: \$55-\$195

INFO: For more information or to purchase subscriptions, the public can visit operasi.org or call **(408) 437-4450** (open Monday through Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm).

-30-

MEDIA: Contact Courtney Heimbeck, Carla Befera & Co.
courtney@cb-pr.com | 650-308-4390

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<https://cbpr.co/press/barberofseville>