

OPERA SAN JOSÉ PRESENTS  
VERDI'S TIMELESS TRAGEDY

# RIGOLETTO

February 17 – March 3, 2024

SAN JOSE, CA (12 January 2024) — **Opera San José's** 40th anniversary season continues with a thrilling production of Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Boasting some of opera's most memorable music, including the signature aria "La donna è mobile," this gripping work follows the jester Rigoletto, his innocent daughter Gilda, and the corrupt Duke of Mantua whose callous treatment of women launches a storm of vengeance, murder, and tragic self-sacrifice. The production is led by visionary director **Dan Wallace Miller**, acclaimed for his work with Seattle Opera and other national companies, while **Jorge Parodi** guest conducts for the South Bay opera company — both making their OSJ debuts. For more information or to purchase tickets (\$55–\$195), the public can visit [operasj.org](https://operasj.org) or call **408-437-4450** (open Monday through Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm).

The production will feature an exciting roster of talented singers, including OSJ favorite, baritone **Eugene Brancoveanu** in the title role of Rigoletto\*. Soprano **Melissa Sondhi**, Opera San José's Wadhvani Artist-in-Resident who starred earlier this season as Juliet in OSJ's *Romeo and Juliet*, returns in the role of Gilda, and tenor Edward Graves, recently seen as Gastone in San Francisco Opera's *La traviata*, makes his OSJ debut as the Duke of Mantua\*. (\* The 2pm, Sunday, Feb. 18 performance will feature baritone **Robert Balonek** as Rigoletto and tenor **WooYoung Yoon** as the Duke of Mantua.)

"*Rigoletto* is one of opera's timeless tragedies and Verdi's most popular works as it embraces the many emotions we have as humans from cruel mockery and white-hot rage to heart-melting despair and undeniable love for family. This beloved opera is an indestructible, eternal testament to the sacrifices we make for our job, our loved ones, and our honor," said **Opera San José General Director / CEO Shawna Lucey**. "Audiences will follow jester Rigoletto and his vendetta that's far from funny and discover who will get the last laugh. This dark work is bursting with unique arias and compositions filled with character insight that take a deeper look into the pursuit and abuse of power."

The stellar cast also includes bass-baritone **Ashraf Sewailam** as the ruthless professional assassin Sparafucile, mezzo soprano **Melisa Bonetti Luna** as Sparafucile's scheming sister Maddalena, and bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** as the doomed Count Monterone along with **Abigail Bush** (as Countess Ceprano), **Andrew Fellows** (as Usher), **Glenn Healy** (as Count Ceprano), **Michael Jesse Kuo** (as Marullo), **Eric Levintow** (as Matteo Borsa), **Courtney Miller** (as Giovanna), and **Leandra Ramm** (as Page). **Brennah Kemmerly** will perform as Page for the 2pm,

Sunday, March 3 performance. The chorus ensemble is comprised of **Jim Cowing, Carter Dougherty, Andrew Green, Robert Glenmore Hall III, Michaël S. Kim, Eric Mellum, Pravesh Mehra, Nicholas Molle, Isa Pudiypura, and Nicolas Vasquez-Gerst.**

The creative team for this production is **Jorge Parodi** (Guest Conductor), **Dan Wallace Miller** (Director), **Steven C. Kemp** (Scenic Designer), **Davida Tkach** (Lighting Designer), **Christina Martin** (Hair and Makeup Designer), **Johannes Löhner** (Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master), and **Michelle Ainna Cuizon** (Assistant Director). **Johannes Löhner** will serve as conductor for this production at the 7:30pm, Friday, March 1 and 2pm, Sunday, March 3 performances.

**Rigoletto**, Verdi's sixteenth opera, is widely considered the first of the composer's middle career masterpieces and features some of opera's most recognizable music. The three-act opera, composed by Giuseppe Verdi with libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, made its world premiere at Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Italy on March 11, 1851. The opera was based on Victor Hugo's controversial 1832 play *Le Roi s'amuse* (*The King Amuses Himself*, performed in English as *The King's Fool*). Following **Rigoletto**, Verdi's next two operas were *Il trovatore* and *La traviata* – all three esteemed staples in operatic repertoire today. **Rigoletto** is set in 16th century Mantua, Italy, following the outsider, a jester who struggles to balance the conflicting nature of beauty and evil in his life. Among its landmark arias is "La donna è mobile," in which the wicked Duke of Mantua explains his understanding of the fickleness of women.

"Classically Curious" night for **Rigoletto** will be held Friday, February 23, 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. More information can be found at [go.operasj.org/ClassicallyCurious](http://go.operasj.org/ClassicallyCurious).

## **Artist Bios:**

### **Eugene Brancoveanu** (Rigoletto)

The Romanian baritone is known for his portrayal of Marcello in Baz Luhrmann's production of Puccini's *La bohème* on Broadway, recognized with a Tony Honors Award for Principal Ensemble. He joined Opera San José as a Resident Artist in the 2019-2020 season portraying Eisenstein in *Die Fleidermaus*, The Father in *Hansel and Gretel*, and Count di Luna in *Il trovatore*. He returned as a Resident for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 seasons as The Count in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, and Ford in *Falstaff*. Between 2014 and 2019 he sang such roles as Leporello, Count Almaviva, Stan Kowalski, Escamillo, Stubb, and Starbuck for Opera San José. Highlights of his international opera credits include leading roles at Theater & Orchester Heidelber, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Salzburger Festspiele, Teatro Rossini (Pisaro), Piccola Scala di Milano, Macerata Opera Festival, Teatrul Național "Ion Luca Caragiale" București, Tokyo

Opera House, Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Opera, Opéra de Montréal, and Israeli Opera Tel Aviv. After his successful apprenticeship at the Merola Opera Program, he was awarded the position of Adler Fellow at San Francisco Opera. During this time, he sang, among others, the roles of Tomski in Tchaikovsky's *Pique Dame*, Riccardo in Rossini's *Italiana in Algeri*, the title role in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, the Pilot in Portman's *The Little Prince*, Belcore in Donizetti's *Elixir of Love*, Enrico in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Tarquinius in Brittan's *Rape of Lucretia*. His long-lasting collaboration with Michael Tilson Thomas saw him sing the lead role in MTT's *The Thomashefskies* which toured across the USA. Modern opera roles include work with Opera Parallèle for which he performed the title role in Philip Glass' *Orpheus*, Nicomedes in Harrison's *Young Caesar*, the Minskman in Dove's *Flight*, and the title role in *The Machine* by Clark Suprenovicz. He has also directed opera productions for San Francisco Opera, Mendocino Music Festival, and Freiburg Opera.

**Robert Balonek** (Rigoletto at the Feb. 18 performance)

Making his OSJ debut in this role, Balonek has been praised by *The New York Times* as having a "commanding, steely baritone and a direct, crystal-clear delivery" and by the *Winston-Salem Journal*, which noted he "might well be the most acrobatic opera singer I have ever seen. His antics are dazzling, and his voice is, too." Balonek has performed throughout the U.S. in bass-baritone oratorio work such as Haydn's *Creation Mass* and the revival of Ariani's *Oratorio di San Francesco*, as well as lyric baritone roles including Silvio in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* and Figaro in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. Balonek has also been the part of many new collaborations, New York premieres, and world premieres including works by composers Lee Hoiby, Gerald Cohen, Mohammed Fairouz, Victor Herbert, Richard Wargo, M. Zachary Johnson, Stephanie DeKenessy, Rapheal Lucas, and Seymour Barab.

**Melissa Sondhi** (Gilda)

Soprano Sondhi returns to Opera San José as the inaugural Wadhvani Artist-in-Residence this season, where she is making three major role debuts: Juliet in the season opener *Romeo and Juliet*, Gilda in this production of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, and Rosalba in Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas*. Her previous appearances with the company include Barbarina in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and the First Witch in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Previous roles include Musetta in Puccini's *La bohème* (San Francisco Opera Guild), Le feu and Le rossignol in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Air Opera Collective), Angelina in Arthur Sullivan and William Schwenck Gilbert's *Trial by Jury* (Lyric Theatre of San José), and Giannetta in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* (Pocket Opera). In 2023, Sondhi won first place in the Adult Classical Voice category at the Los Angeles Semifinals of the Music International Grand Prix competition and was also a semifinalist in the Orpheus Vocal Competition in 2021.

**Edward Graves** (Duke of Mantua)

Praised by *Opera News* as a tenor of "stunningly sweet tone," tenor Graves is a second-year Adler Fellow at San Francisco Opera. His most recent Bay Area performances include a

workshop of Jake Heggie's opera *Intelligence* with Houston Grand Opera, as well as Stone/Eunuch in Bright Sheng's *Dreams of the Red Chamber* and Gastone in Verdi's *La traviata*, both on the San Francisco Opera mainstage. Elsewhere, he joined Virginia Symphony for Handel's *Messiah*, Detroit Opera as Policeman 2 in Tesori's *Blue*, Berkshire Choral International as the title role in Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus*, and made his Spoleto Festival USA debut as Anatol in Barber's *Vanessa*. His appearance in Merola Opera Program's *What The Heart Desires* earned a *San Francisco Chronicle* rave for his "superbly bright, clarion sound." This Florentine Opera Company Baumgartner Studio Artist has also performed with Michigan Opera Theatre, Seattle Opera, and The Glimmerglass Festival. Graves is a 2022 San Francisco District winner of the Metropolitan Opera's Laffont Competition.

**WooYoung Yoon** (Duke of Mantua at the Feb. 18 performance)

Tenor Yoon recently made his role debut in Berlioz's *Le Damnation de Faust* with the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional de Costa Rica with Maestro John Nelson. This past season, Yoon performed as Almaviva in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* with Knoxville Opera and the New York City Opera, Beethoven's *9th Symphony* with the Lubbock Symphony, returned to the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional de Costa Rica for Beethoven's *Christus am Oelberg*, and made his Carnegie Hall debut as tenor soloist in Mozart's *Regina Coeli*. Last summer he performed Edgardo in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* with the New York City Opera in Bryant Square Park. A 2022 Opera Index Membership award winner, the Korean tenor's other recent opera credits include Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Tito in Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*, and Belmonte in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Manhattan School of Music. A 2018 Merola participant, he returned to San Francisco Opera the following season for a recital in the Schwabacher Recital Series, before joining the New Jersey State Opera as Rodolfo in Puccini's *La bohème*. As a young artist at the Trentino Music Festival, he made his role debut as Don José in Bizet's *Carmen*. He reprised the role the following season for the Martina Arroyo Foundation. A 2019 Grand Prize Winner in the Orpheus Competition, Yoon was a Metropolitan Opera National Council Eastern Regional Finalist, a finalist in the Harbin competition, a semi-finalist in the Zachary Competition, and won the Grand Prix Prize at the Talents of the World Voice Competition, as well as the Audience Favorite Award.

**Ashraf Sewailam** (Sparafucile)

Bass-baritone Sewailam began his career as a Cairo Opera Company house soloist, where he performed many roles including Dulcamara in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, Gaudenzio in Rossini's *Il signor Bruschino*, Ramfis in Verdi's *Aida*, Palémon in Massenet's *Thaïs*, and Sparafucile in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Sewailam made his United States debut in 2004 with Opera Colorado performing the role of Leporello in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and made his New York City directorial debut directing a production of Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* with dell'Arte Opera Ensemble. Sewailam made his mainstage Metropolitan Opera debut in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* in 2021. Additionally, he has directed Verdi's *Otello* at Central City Opera and Donizetti's *Lucrezia* at Opera Louisiana. He was named a prize winner at the Neue Stimmen (New Voices) international competition in Gütersloh, Germany. This season, Sewailam will make his company debut with Lyric Opera of Chicago and with Inland Northwest Opera. He also

returns to New Orleans Opera and Seattle Opera. Sewailam has performed throughout the world with arts organizations including Tulsa Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, South Dakota Symphony Orchestra, Washington Concert Opera, Denver Philharmonic Orchestra, Minnesota Opera, Virginia Opera, Opera Steamboat, San Diego Opera, Austin Opera, New Zealand Opera, Opera Southwest, Madison Opera, Opera Grand Rapids, Toledo Opera, Opera Carolina, Opera Theatre in the Rockies, Queensland Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera of San Diego, Lyric Baltimore, Central City Opera, Opera Memphis, Fargo Moorhead Opera, Chautauqua Opera Company, The Chattanooga Symphony & Opera, Colorado Springs Philharmonic, and Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra, among others.

**Melisa Bonetti Luna** (Maddalena)

Mezzo-soprano Bonetti made her company debut with Opera San José this season as an Artist-in-Residence, appearing as Stéphanie in *Romeo and Juliet*. Hailed by *Opera Today* as “a warm, supple mezzo that struck all the right impressions,” Bonetti is a versatile singer whose experience encompasses a mix of new works, large traditional operas, and concerts. In 2024, Bonetti will appear as Lola in Pietro Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana* with the Helena Symphony. Recent highlights include the lead role in New Latin Wave and National Sawdust’s premiere of *Paraíso* by Sokio and Natasha Tiniacos, and appearances as mezzo-soprano soloist at Carnegie Hall for Bach’s *Magnificat* and *Christmas Oratorio* with The Cecilia Chorus of New York, as well as soloist at Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center and the Kimmel Center with the Philadelphia Orchestra in a concert of Ancient Tang Poems with the iSing! International Festival.

**Philip Skinner** (Count Monterone)

Bass baritone Skinner has performed with Opera Parallèle, Pacific Symphony, Charlottesville Opera, West Edge Opera, San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Symphony, San Diego Opera, Livermore Valley Opera, Madison Opera, Fresno Grand Opera, Santa Rosa Symphony, Festival Opera, West Bay Opera, Mendocino Music Festival, Opera Colorado, Florida Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, National Symphony Orchestra, New York City Opera, Atlanta Opera, Opera de Nantes, Waiting National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Berkeley Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, New York’s Metropolitan Opera, and others. The Adler Fellow alum and Schwabacher Debut Recitalist has also played at iconic venues include Teatro di San Carlo in Naples and at the Hollywood Bowl. Skinner has a long association with San Francisco Opera with more than 375 performances in nearly 60 productions. His international performances also include the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Victoria State Opera in Melbourne, Vancouver Opera, and La Monnaie De Munt in Brussels, Europe with the Budapest Symphony Orchestra.

**Abigail Bush** (Countess Ceprano)

Hailing from Los Angeles, soprano Bush’s notable recent performances include her portrayal of Diana in Offenbach’s *Orpheus in the Underworld* with Pocket Opera. She covered the role of the Stepmother and featured chorus solos in Opera San José’s production of Alma Deutscher’s

*Cinderella*. Later this season, she will play Anne Page in Otto Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with Pocket Opera.

**Andrew Fellows** (Usher)

Baritone Fellows returns to Opera San José following his appearance as Grégorio in this season's *Romeo and Juliet*. He first appeared with the company in its production of Bizet's *Carmen* during the 2021-2022 season. Fellows made his professional debut in 2019 singing the roles of Man One and Two, while covering the role of Elder McLean, in Festival Opera's production of Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*. During the pandemic, Fellows took part in Lisette Oropesa's masterclass series, followed by his return to the stage in the role of Rodin's Apprentice in the world premiere of *A Jake Heggie Triptych* with Festival Opera. Other roles include his debut as Figaro in the Stanford University Opera department's production of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, as well as Escamillo with Varna International Music Festival's production of Bizet's *Carmen*, under the baton of Gregory Buchalter.

**Glenn Healy** (Count Ceprano)

Bass Healy made his professional debut as Billy Jackrabbit with Michigan Opera Theater in Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* in 2017. Since then, he covered Second Armoured Man in Sarasota Opera's *Die Zauberflöte* (2019) and Alcindoro/Benoit in Des Moines Metro Opera's *La bohème* (2019) while participating in their respective Apprentice Programs. He made his company and role debuts with Opera San José as Ferrando and Old Gypsy in Verdi's *Il trovatore* before the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled his following engagements of Second Armored Man and Speaker in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera San José, Dr. Grenvil in *La traviata* at West Bay Opera, and Mr. Lister, Karl Marx, and Voiceover in *Elizabeth Cree* at West Edge Opera. Since then, he has appeared with the Reno Philharmonic, Pocket Opera, the San Francisco Opera chorus, and in performance at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral.

**Michael Jesse Kuo** (Marullo)

Michael Jesse Kuo returns to Opera San José where he has appeared in past productions including Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*, Puccini's *Tosca*, and Bernstein's *West Side Story*. He has also appeared with San Francisco Opera, Cinnabar Theater, and others. He has been studying piano since he was 10 and singing since he was 16. He first started teaching music in his senior year of college in 2014. Since then, he has taught piano and voice at several music schools including Pacific Music Academy and Willow Glen Music School.

**Eric Levintow** (Matteo Borsa)

Tenor Levintow made his role debuts as Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with West Bay Opera, and Spoletta in Puccini's *Tosca* with Pocket Opera and Cinnabar Theater. He also joined the San Francisco Opera chorus (Wagner's *Lohengrin*, Verdi's *Il trovatore*, and Opera Ball Gala Concert) and the San Francisco Symphony chorus (Bach's *Magnificat* and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*). He recently played Nemorino in Donizetti's *Elixir of Love* with the San Francisco Opera

Together outreach program. Levintow also performed in leading tenor roles for new works including Judah in *Lost Childhood* by Janice Hamer, Bishop of Puebla in *Juana* by Carla Lucero, Yitzchak in *Akeidah* by Michel Klein, and Hans in *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Nicky Sohn. Other performances include Jo the Loiterer in Thomas' *The Mother of Us All*, tenor soloist in *Songfest* by Leonard Bernstein, and tenor soloist in Mozart's *Coronation Mass* with UCLA Philharmonia. Other opera and musical theatre roles include Yamadori in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* with Golden Gate Opera, Dorvil in Rossini's *La scala di seta* with Phènix Opera Company, Leandré in Gounod's *Le médecin malgré lui* with Pocket Opera. Levintow is also a professional pit orchestra guitarist in the Bay Area. Shows played include *RENT*, *Legally Blonde*, *Spring Awakening*, *The Wedding Singer*, *Footloose*, *Pippin*, *Once on this Island*, *West Side Story*, *Newsies*, and *Matilda*.

### **Courtney Miller** (Giovanna)

Praised by *Opera News* for her "fluent musicality," mezzo-soprano Miller makes her company debut with Opera San José, where she will serve as an Artist-in-Residence for the 2023-2024 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).

### **Leandra Ramm** (Page)

Mezzo-soprano Ramm has performed at San Francisco Opera, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the United Nations, Symphony Space and Davies Symphony Hall. Ramm made her debut as a soloist in Kurt Weill's *The Eternal Road* with the American Symphony Orchestra at Avery Fisher Hall. Recently, she performed the title role in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, Third Lady in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Musetta in Verdi's *La bohème* with San Francisco Opera Guild. She starred in *Ecstasy* presented by San Francisco Symphony's Soundbox and appeared as alto soloist with the San Francisco Symphony in Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, and Bach's *Magnificat*, conducted by Ragnar Bohlin. In 2021, she received the honors of National Finalist in the Women In Opera Division, and Semi-Finalist in the Art Song Division from The American Prize, and in 2019 was a grant recipient of the Opera America's Career Blueprints for Singers. Ramm was selected by the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music in the 2020 COVID-19 Response Pairings and debuted a piece by Grey Grant specifically composed for her voice. She has performed with VOPERA, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Christman Opera Company, A Light Knight Music Productions, Quarantine Opera, Opera on Tap San Francisco, Air Operatique, San Francisco Choral Society, and Silicon Valley Philharmonic.

**Brennah Kemmerly** (Page at the 2pm, Sunday, March 3 performance)

Mezzo-soprano Kemmerly makes her role debut at Opera San José as Page in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Kemmerly has appeared in the chorus of numerous productions with Opera San José, including the entirety of the 2022-2023 season and the upcoming *Florencia en el Amazonas* by Daniel Catán. Kemmerly has worked with various companies around the Bay Area, performing in musical theatre, opera, and operetta. Some favorite credits include Major-General Stanley in Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* with Bay Area Opera Collaborative; Celeste in *Sunday in the Park with George* with Los Altos Stage Company, A Player in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* with South Bay Musical Theatre, Peggy in *A Taffeta Christmas* with Tabard Theatre, Ginger Brooks in *The 1940s Radio Hour* with San Jose Musical Theatre, as well as productions of *The Secret Garden*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and *A Little Night Music*. Kemmerly participated in the Opera San José Young Artist Summer Training Program in 2016.

**Jorge Parodi** (Guest Conductor)

Reviewed as having "the most expressive conducting hands since Stokowski" by *New York Daily News*, Maestro Parodi has worked extensively in North America, Latin America, and Asia. He has conducted for Opera Tampa, New York City Opera, The Atlanta Opera, Opera Hispánica, Opera Grand Rapids, Buenos Aires Lírica (Argentina), Castleton Festival in Virginia, The Banff Centre (Canada), Savannah OPERA, Opera Orlando, Chautauqua Opera, The Juilliard School, Amarillo Opera, Gulfshore Opera, Merola Opera, New Orleans Opera, and El Paso Opera. He led the world premieres of Anton Coppola's *Lady Swanwhite* for Opera Tampa, Michael Ching's *The Birthday Clown* for Savannah OPERA, John Musto's *Rhoda and the Fossil Hunt* in a co-production for On Site Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago Lyric's Unlimited, and Pittsburgh Opera. Parodi has worked with a wide range of ensembles, such as the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica de Michoacán (Mexico), NHK Symphony (Japan), Ensemble XXI, Orquesta Sinfónica del Conservatorio Nacional de Música (Argentina), Castleton Festival Orchestra, Metamorphosis Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble Zipoli for the American Baroque, and the Juilliard Pre College Orchestra, among others. He has worked with such companies as Teatro Colón in Argentina, Volgograd State Opera in Russia, Encuentros Internacionales de Opera in Mexico, and International Vocal Arts Institute in Israel. Recently, Maestro Parodi was appointed Artistic Director of the Sherrill Milnes VOICE Programs (VOICExperiences and Savannah VOICE Festival). Maestro Parodi is also the General and Artistic Director of Opera Hispánica, the premier company in the United States focused on the Hispanic vocal repertoire and on the Latin perspective. In 2022, Parodi was appointed Music Director of Gulfshore Opera in Southwest Florida. He is also the Music Director of Opera in Williamsburg, Virginia. 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 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, an intense program for pianists and singers in the early stages of their professional career. Maestro Parodi was the Music Director of the Senior Opera Theatre at the Manhattan School of Music, where he led its



productions for 12 seasons to critical acclaim. He is also a prizewinner at the Biennale de Arte of Buenos Aires.

**Johannes Löhner** (Guest Conductor for 7:30pm, Friday, March 1 and 2pm, Sunday, March 3 performances)

Maestro Löhner is Resident Conductor at Opera San José, music director of the Kammerorchester Regensburg, and adjunct professor of conducting at the Hochschule für Musik Nürnberg. He has been mentored by Sir Roger Norrington and Riccardo Muti, speaks six languages, and performs internationally, traveling upwards of 20 weeks a year. He has gathered experience with institutions such as the Orchestre de Paris, London Philharmonic, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Stuttgart Radio-Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Hamburg Symphony, Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Nürnberger Symphoniker, and many others. In 2021, Löhner led productions of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Alcina* at Chicago Summer Opera. In 2022, he was named Director of Studio Artists and Assistant Conductor at Sarasota Opera, working on Donizetti's *La Fille du Régiment*, Puccini's *Tosca*, Bizet's *Pearl Fishers*, and Verdi's *Attila*.

**Dan Wallace Miller** (Director)

Hailed as a "visionary director" by *The Stranger*, Miller's stage direction is "riveting... well executed, and relevant" (*CityArts*) and has been described as "a powerful gust of invigorating fresh air" (*Opera Today*). In 2022, Miller became the Artistic Director for Inland Northwest Opera, having previously directed a filmed version of a new production of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* which was met with rave reviews. Last season, he created a new production of Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* for the Wolf Trap Opera and the University of Oklahoma, returned to Central City Opera to direct a new production of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*, and directed *La traviata* for Inland Northwest Opera. This season, he directs *Pagliacci* at Seattle Opera, Apprentice Scenes at Santa Fe Opera, and a new conception of *The Merry Widow* for Portland State University.

**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](http://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 20 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's** 40th anniversary season continues with a thrilling production of Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Boasting some of opera's most memorable music, including the signature aria "La donna è mobile," this gripping work follows the jester Rigoletto (baritone **Eugene Brancoveanu\***), his innocent daughter Gilda (OSJ Wadhvani Artist-in-Residence, soprano **Melissa Sondhi**), and the corrupt Duke of Mantua (tenor **Edward Graves\***) whose callous treatment of women launches a storm of vengeance, murder, and tragic self-sacrifice. The production is led by visionary director **Dan Wallace Miller**, acclaimed for his work with Seattle Opera and other national companies, while **Jorge Parodi** guest conducts for the South Bay opera company – both making their OSJ debuts.

(\* The 2pm, Sunday, Feb. 18 performance will feature baritone **Robert Balonek** as Rigoletto and tenor **WooYoung Yoon** as the Duke of Mantua.)

**WHEN:** 7:30pm, Saturday, February 17 – opening night  
2:00pm, Sunday, February 18  
7:30pm, Friday, February 23 – "Classically Curious" night  
2:00pm, Sunday, February 25  
7:30pm, Friday, March 1  
2:00pm, Sunday, March 3

**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 [operasj.org](http://operasj.org) or call **408-437-4450** (open Monday through Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm).

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**MEDIA:** Contact Courtney Heimbeck, Carla Befera & Co.  
[courtney@cb-pr.com](mailto:courtney@cb-pr.com) | 650-308-4390

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