

OPERA SAN JOSÉ PRESENTS
FREE COMMUNITY EVENTS TO CELEBRATE
THE BAY AREA PREMIERE OF

FLORENCIA EN EL AMAZONAS

SAN JOSÉ, CA (19 March 2024) — **Opera San José** is bringing free music to the community, celebrating the first Spanish language opera performed on its mainstage. A series of free events will be staged March 22 - April 25, offering the public sneak peeks at Daniel Catán's magical realism opera, which will receive its Bay Area premiere April 20 - May 5 at the California Theatre in downtown San José. With the support of a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant, Opera San José will present free public performances of excerpts from this rich opera at community events, library concerts, next month's South of First Friday, and host a panel discussion (see schedule below). For more information the public can visit operasj.org.

In Opera San José's 40th anniversary season finale, *Florencia en el Amazonas*, Mexican composer Catán transports audiences to a 20th-century riverboat sailing the Amazon River. There, a famous opera singer is returning home to perform, while hoping to reunite with her lover, a butterfly hunter who has disappeared into the jungle. A story rich in allusion that bridges drama and fantasy, *Florencia en el Amazonas* will be performed in Spanish with English and Spanish supertitles. Celebrated Latina international director Crystal Manich helms this production with Opera San José Director of Music Joséph Marcheso conducting. *Florencia en el Amazonas* will be presented April 20 - May 5, 2024 at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street, San José.

Free community concerts with excerpts from *Florencia en el Amazonas* will be offered:

5:00pm, Friday, March 22, Mexican Heritage Plaza, 1700 Alum Rock Ave, San José

3:30pm, Sunday, March 24, Biblioteca Latinoamericana Library, 921 S 1st St, San José

3:30pm, Sunday, April 7, East San José Carnegie Library, 1102 E Santa Clara St, San José

In addition, the public is welcome to join these free events at the California Theatre:

South First Friday, 5:30pm, April 5, California Theatre, 345 South First St., San José

Opera San José will open the doors of the historic California Theatre for art lovers during Downtown San Jose SoFA District's evening art walk South First Friday, offering free music and activities, including performances from *Florencia en el Amazonas*. In celebration of the first Spanish language opera performed on Opera San José's mainstage, the festivities will include Folklórico dancers, a Mariachi band, delicious empanadas from Casa Guzmanía, refreshing agua fresca drinks provided by Lucy's Mexican Grill, and activities such as butterfly origami crafts and face painting from Hey Balloon Lady & Party People, offering fun for operagoers of all ages.

Panel Discussion, 3:00pm, Thursday, April 25, California Theatre, 345 South First St., San José
Opera San José will host a panel of performers, artists, and others to discuss the background of this magical realism production.

In addition to this community events, Opera San José will host a “Classically Curious” night for ***Florencia en el Amazonas***, Friday, April 26, 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 other social and community events that connect young adult opera lovers. More information can be found at go.operasj.org/ClassicallyCurious.

ABOUT THE OPERA

The third opera by acclaimed Mexican composer Daniel Catán, with a libretto by Marcela Fuentes-Berain, ***Florencia en el Amazonas*** includes motifs taken from and characters inspired by the novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Colombian Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel García Márquez. It was co-commissioned by Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and Seattle Opera – making it the first Spanish language opera to be commissioned by major U.S. opera houses. ***Florencia en el Amazonas*** made its world premiere in Houston in 1996, followed by premieres in 1997 and 1998 in Los Angeles and Seattle, and its Latin American premiere in 1999 in Mexico City. It has since gone on to presentations throughout the world, making its New York Metropolitan Opera debut in November 2023, the Met’s first work by a Latin American composer and its third-ever work presented in Spanish. *The New York Times* hailed ***Florencia en el Amazonas*** as “impressive,” noting “Catán’s score endlessly undulates and glitters,” while *New York Classical Review* praised Catán’s work as “lush, lyrical, and colorful.” ***Florencia en el Amazonas*** is presented under license by Associated Music Publishers, Inc. copyright owners.

Opera San José (OSJ) is a flagship arts organization of Silicon Valley. Maintaining a resident company of artists, Opera San José 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. Opera San José 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.

Opera San José performs at the **California Theatre**, 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** is bringing free music to the community, celebrating the first Spanish language opera performed on its mainstage. A series of free events will be staged March 22 - April 25, offering the public sneak peeks at Daniel Catán's magical realism opera, which will receive its Bay Area premiere April 20 - May 5 at the California Theatre in downtown San José. With the support of a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant, Opera San José will present free public performances of excerpts from this rich opera at community events, library concerts, next month's South of First Friday, and host a panel discussion.

WHEN: 5:00pm, Friday, March 22 – Mexican Heritage Plaza
3:30pm, Sunday, March 24 – Biblioteca Latinoamericana Library
5:30pm, Friday, April 5 – South of First Friday, California Theatre
3:30pm, Sunday, April 7 – East San José Carnegie Library
3:00pm, Thursday, April 25 – Panel discussion, California Theatre

WHERE: **Mexican Heritage Plaza**, 1700 Alum Rock Ave, San José
Biblioteca Latinoamericana Library, 921 S 1st St, San José
East San José Carnegie Library, 1102 E Santa Clara St, San José
California Theatre, 345 South First St., San José, CA

TICKETS: FREE

INFO: For more information the public can visit 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.
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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<https://cbpr.co/press/florenciaenelamazonas/>