

OPERA SAN JOSÉ ANNOUNCES CAST CHANGE FOR
CATÁN'S MAGICAL REALISM ADVENTURE

FLORENCIA EN EL AMAZONAS

NOW STARRING ELIZABETH CABALLERO

April 20 – May 5, 2024

SAN JOSÉ, CA (8 April 2024) — In a last-minute change, internationally acclaimed soprano **Elizabeth Caballero** will take over the title role in the Bay Area premiere of Daniel Catán's captivating opera, *Florencia en el Amazonas* presented by **Opera San José**. The singer, whose work has been described as "a thrilling balance of pearly tone, exacting technique, and brazen physicality" (*The New York Times*) and "a find: her opulent soprano rings freely and lyrically throughout her range" (*The Wall Street Journal*) is stepping in to replace the originally announced soprano **Marlen Nahhas**. Said Opera San José General Director/CEO **Shawna Lucey**, "We wish Marlen all the best and we are profoundly grateful for Elizabeth, who is leaping to our aid to take on this important role for a historic moment for Opera San José as we present the first Spanish language opera on our mainstage." Caballero, who has been seen at opera houses around the world including frequent starring roles at The Metropolitan Opera, is fortunately familiar with the role of Florencia. She has given critically acclaimed performances in *Florencia en el Amazonas* at Madison Opera, Nashville Opera, and New York City Opera where she was hailed as "stunning, singing with beautiful passion" (*New York Classical Review*) and "plush-toned, expressive" (*The New York Times*). *Florencia en el Amazonas* will be presented **April 20 - May 5, 2024** (performance dates/times below) at the **California Theatre**, 345 South First Street, San José. 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).

Concluding its 40th anniversary season, *Florencia en el Amazonas* marks its debut at the California Theatre as Opera San José's first Spanish language opera performed on its mainstage. In this two-act work, 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** returns to OSJ where she helmed the company's award-winning production of *West Side Story*. Opera San José Director of Music **Joseph Marcheso** will conduct. Born in Havana, Cuba, Caballero built a reputation as "an intelligently responsive actress" (*Opera News*) after a string of early successes throughout the United States: Donna Elvira in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at New York City Opera, Cio-Cio San in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* at Lyric Opera Kansas City, Alice Ford in Verdi's *Falstaff* with Virginia Opera, Donna Anna in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at Madison Opera, and Susanna in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* in her

company debut at Seattle Opera, followed by a triumphant performance as Mimì in Puccini's *La bohème*. Caballero's dramatically compelling interpretation of her signature role, Violetta in Verdi's *La traviata*, led to recent performances of the role in houses around the world including The Metropolitan Opera, Opera Carolina, Opera de Costa Rica, Florentine Opera, Madison Opera, Pacific Symphony, and the Orlando Philharmonic. She was engaged to perform the role of Musetta in *La bohème* for The Metropolitan Opera after capturing attention in the role at New York City Opera where *The New York Times* hailed her as "the evening's most show-stopping performance offering a thrilling balance of pearly tone, exacting technique and brazen physicality." She subsequently returned to The Met in its new production of Bizet's *Carmen* as part of The Metropolitan Opera: Live in HD series and the role of Mimi in the production of Puccini's *La bohème*. Recent international house debuts include Staatsoper Stuttgart as Mimi in Puccini's *La bohème*, Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City as Desdemona in Verdi's *Otello*, and at Teatro de la Zarzuela Madrid singing the title role in the European premiere of Roig's *Cecilia Valdés* based on the Cuban novel of the same name. She also returned to The Metropolitan Opera for its production of Verdi's *La traviata*.

Florencia en el Amazonas, the third opera by acclaimed Mexican composer Daniel Catán, with a libretto by Marcela Fuentes-Berain, 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*** is presented under license by Associated Music Publishers, Inc. copyright owners.

"Classically Curious" night for ***Florencia en el Amazonas*** will be held 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 social and community events that will connect young adult opera lovers. More information can be found at go.operasj.org/ClassicallyCurious.

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.

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** will conclude its 40th anniversary season with the Bay Area premiere of Daniel Catán's captivating opera, ***Florencia en el Amazonas***, marking its debut at the California Theatre as the company's first Spanish language opera performed on its mainstage. In this two-act work, 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** returns to OSJ where she helmed the company's award-winning production of *West Side Story*.

WHEN: 7:30pm, Saturday, April 20 – opening night
2:00pm, Sunday, April 21
7:30pm, Friday, April 26 – “Classically Curious” night
2:00pm, Sunday, April 28
7:30pm, Friday, May 3
2:00pm, Sunday, May 5

Special community event:

3:00pm, Thursday, April 25 – Panel discussion at the California Theatre

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

TICKETS: \$55-\$195

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

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