

OPERA SAN JOSÉ PRESENTS  
**OPERA IN THE ROSE GARDEN**

A FREE OUTDOOR COMMUNITY CONCERT  
AT ICONIC SAN JOSÉ VENUE

Saturday, June 20

SAN JOSÉ, CA (18 May 2026) – **Opera San José** invites the community to celebrate the joy of live music under the summer sky at *Opera in the Rose Garden*, a free outdoor concert **featuring the acclaimed Opera San José Orchestra** under the direction of OSJ Music Director and conductor **Joseph Marcheso**. Presented in the country’s most celebrated municipal rose garden, the event is underwritten by Applied Materials and the San José Sports Authority as part of SJ26’s celebration of the FIFA World Cup, showcasing San José as a global destination for both world-class sporting events and world-class opera. The evening will feature beloved selections from *Die Fledermaus*, *Pagliacci*, *Rigoletto*, *Carmen*, *The Pearl Fishers*, and more, performed by an all-star lineup of Opera San José artists and guest performers including internationally acclaimed Italian tenor **Pasquale Esposito** and “The Voice of the Capital of Silicon Valley,” soprano **Victoria McDowell**. *Opera in the Rose Garden* will take place **Saturday, June 20, 2026**, at the **Municipal Rose Garden**, 1649 Naglee Ave, San Jose, with check-in beginning at 5:00pm and the concert running from 6:00pm to 7:30pm. For more information, visit [operasj.org](http://operasj.org) or call **408-437-4450** (open Monday through Friday, 11:00am –5:30pm).

“Opera San José is proud to be a driver of the sports and entertainment economy that's defining the future of our region — because the economy of tomorrow is built on exactly this kind of world-class cultural experience,” said CEO & General Director of Opera San José, **Shawna Lucey**. “As the FIFA World Cup brings the world to our doorstep, we're showing that San José is a global destination for both world-class sport and world-class art. Or as my friend John Poch put it: even if the Italian players aren't here, their tenors are. This concert is a celebration of what makes live opera so powerful — its ability to bring people together through shared emotion, storytelling, and music. Whether you're a lifelong opera fan or experiencing opera for the very first time, we've designed this evening as a gift to the community: an accessible, welcoming gathering in one of America's most beautiful gardens, where families and neighbors of all ages can share in the joy and connection that only live performance can create.”

Vendors will be on site throughout the evening, and complimentary Kona Ice will be available for all attendees. Guests are encouraged to bring blankets, lawn chairs, and picnic items to enjoy the performance in one of San José’s most iconic outdoor spaces known as “America’s Best Rose Garden.”

The concert will feature performances by sopranos **Madison Hatten** and **Nicole Koh**; tenors **Alex Boyer**, **Edward Graves**, and **Ben Gulley**; baritones **Eugene Brancoveanu** and **Luis Alejandro**

**Orozco**; bass-baritone **Philip Skinner**; and special guest artists **Pasquale Esposito** and **Victoria McDowell**.

*Opera in the Rose Garden* is made possible in part through a grant awarded to Opera San José by the Applied Materials Foundation Community Fund. Additional support has been provided through the ARTS WILL PLAY IN 2026 grant, an in-kind marketing grant awarded by the City of San José Office of Cultural Affairs, Visit San José, and San José Sports Authority.

## **ARTIST BIOS:**

### **Madison Hatten**

Lyric soprano **Madison Hatten** is celebrated for her exquisite voice, sparkling coloratura, and warm, resonant lower register, all complemented by a dynamic and athletic stage presence. Recent engagements include the title role in *Iolanta* with the Tahoe Symphony, Baroness Gondremarck (*La Vie Parisienne*, Pocket Opera), and covering Judith (*Bluebeard's Castle*, Opera San José). Additional highlights include Mimì (*La Bohème*, Northern Lights Music Festival) and a celebrated trio of Mozart heroines: Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*, Boston Opera Collaborative), Countess Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*, Janiec Opera Company at Brevard), and Fiordiligi (*Così Fan Tutte*, Boston Conservatory Opera). Other engagements included soprano soloist in Verdi Requiem with the Tahoe Symphony and a covering Violetta (*La Traviata*, Opera San José).

### **Nicole Koh**

Current Opera San José Artist-in-Residence **Nicole Koh**, a soprano born in Daly City, California, appeared with the company as Annina (*La Traviata*), Despina (*Così Fan Tutte*), and as both the Queen of the Night and Papagena (*The Magic Flute*). She has also performed Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*, Chautauqua Opera) and sang the title role in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* with the Chautauqua Opera Conservatory. Her additional credits include covering the role of Winnie (*Sky on Swings*), performing the title role in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and singing Nella (*Gianni Schicchi*).

### **Alex Boyer**

Tenor **Alex Boyer** has earned recognition for his commanding voice and compelling dramatic portrayals across the lyric and spinto tenor repertoire. Praised by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for bringing “a large, potent sound” and gripping emotional intensity to Festival Opera’s production of *Pagliacci*, Boyer has established himself as a powerful interpreter of both classic and contemporary works. Recent career highlights include his Metropolitan Opera debut as Captain Ahab (*Moby-Dick*), where he stepped into the role on short notice to critical acclaim, as well as appearances with the Met covering roles in *Tosca*, *Fidelio*, and *Pique Dame*. Recent and upcoming engagements include Senator Robert F. Kennedy in the world premiere of Nicolás Benavides’ *Dolores* with West Edge Opera, Opera Southwest, and San Diego Opera, Herod (*Salome*, Lyric Opera of Chicago), Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*, Pacific Northwest Opera), and Don José (*Carmen*, Opera San José). Additional career highlights include performances with San Francisco Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, West Edge Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Livermore Valley Opera, and Island City Opera in roles including Cavaradossi (*Tosca*), Captain Ahab (*Moby-Dick*), Canio (*Pagliacci*), Siegfried (*Legend of the Ring*), and the Duke (*Rigoletto*). A former Opera San José Artist-in-Resident, Boyer performed more than 20 leading roles during his tenure with the company, an experience that helped shape his artistry and versatility onstage. He is also an alumnus of the Merola Opera Program and the Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Program for Singers.

## **Edward Graves**

Praised by *Opera News* for his “stunningly sweet tone,” tenor **Edward Graves** is recognized for his vibrant lyric sound, refined musicianship, and compelling stage presence. A graduate of the prestigious Merola Opera Program and former Adler Fellow at San Francisco Opera, Graves has quickly emerged as one of the most exciting young tenors of his generation. Recent and upcoming engagements include Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*, Anchorage Opera), Rodolfo (*La Bohème*, Opera Baltimore and Opera Delaware), Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*, Opera in Williamsburg), Alfredo (*La Traviata*, Opera Tampa and Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera), and the Duke (*Rigoletto*, Opera San José). He also made his Metropolitan Opera debut in *Die Zauberflöte* and returned for the company’s 2025 season. Additional appearances include performances with Houston Grand Opera, Opera Omaha, Virginia Opera, and the Berkeley Community Chorus & Orchestra. During his tenure with San Francisco Opera, Graves performed Stone/Eunuch in Bright Sheng’s *Dreams of the Red Chamber*, Gastone (*La Traviata*), Ruiz (*Il Trovatore*), and Rodolfo (*Bohème Out of the Box*), while also covering leading roles including Alfredo and Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*). In 2023, he earned critical acclaim for his portrayal of Anatol (*Vanessa*, Spoleto Festival USA). A recipient of numerous honors, Graves was a 2022 San Francisco District Winner of The Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, a recipient of the Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation, and prizewinner in the Loren L. Zachary Society Vocal Competition, Cedar Rapids Opera Esther & Myron Vocal Competition, and Opera Columbus Cooper-Bing Competition.

## **Ben Gulley**

Hailed as “outstanding” by *Opera News* and described by *San Francisco Classical Voice* as “startlingly gifted,” tenor **Ben Gulley** is an award-winning artist and has performed leading roles across opera, concert, and musical theatre in the United States and abroad. Highlights of the 2025–26 season included Don José (*Carmen*, Knoxville Opera) and Canio (*Pagliacci*, Opera San José and Opera Las Vegas). Other engagements include Radamès (*Aida*, Anchorage Opera) along with concert appearances with major orchestras nationwide. Recent successes include acclaimed debuts as Romeo (*Roméo et Juliette*), Canio (*Pagliacci*), Cavaradossi (*Tosca*), and Quasimodo (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*), for which he won *BroadwayWorld*’s Best Actor in a Musical. Gulley has appeared with the Belgian National Orchestra, Portland Opera, Sarasota Opera, Fort Worth Opera, and Symphony San José, among many others, and is equally at home in crossover and musical theatre repertoire.

## **Eugene Brancoveanu**

A Romanian-born baritone renowned for his dynamic stage presence and versatile performances across opera, musical theatre, and concert stages, **Eugene Brancoveanu** gained significant acclaim for his portrayal of Marcello in Baz Luhrmann’s Broadway production of Puccini’s *La Bohème*, recognized with a Tony Honors Award for Principal Ensemble. Brancoveanu’s extensive operatic repertoire includes leading roles such as the title role in *Don Giovanni*, Count Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), and Escamillo (*Carmen*). He has performed with prestigious companies including San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, New York City Opera, and the Israeli Opera. In the 2019-20 season, Brancoveanu joined Opera San José as an Artist in Resident, portraying Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), The Father (*Hansel and Gretel*), and Count di Luna (*Il trovatore*). He continued his residency in the following two seasons, performing as Count Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), and Ford (*Falstaff*). In 2024, he returned to perform the title role in Verdi’s *Rigoletto* and in 2025, he performed the villainous Octavio Rivera y Moncada in Héctor

Armienta's *Zorro*. Beyond his singing career, Brancoveanu has ventured into stage direction, making his debut with *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at West Bay Opera. He has since directed productions such as *La Bohème*, *Don Giovanni*, and *The Barber of Seville* for the Mendocino Music Festival, as well as *Carmen* and *La Bohème* for Livermore Valley Opera. Brancoveanu has performed with esteemed orchestras, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where he portrayed the title role in Shostakovich's *Orango* under the baton of Esa-Pekka Salonen. He has also been a soloist in Orff's *Carmina Burana* with various orchestras and has an active recital career.

### **Luis Alejandro Orozco**

Praised by *South Florida Classical Review* for his "voluminous baritone and beautiful legato," Mexican American baritone **Luis Alejandro Orozco**'s recent and upcoming engagements include Moncada (*Zorro*, Pacific Opera Project), Marcello (*La Bohème*, Knoxville Opera), and *Carmina Burana*, Youth Orchestras of San Antonio. He has appeared with major companies including The Metropolitan Opera, Opera Omaha, Nashville Opera, Madison Opera, Minnesota Opera, and Opéra de Lyon, performing roles such as the title role in *Don Giovanni*, Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), and Riolobo (*Florencia en el Amazonas*). Internationally, Orozco has performed in Switzerland, South Korea, Italy, and France. Widely regarded as the leading United States interpreter of El Payador in Piazzolla's *María de Buenos Aires*, he appears regularly in opera, concert, and recital performances across the country.

### **Philip Skinner**

Distinguished bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** is widely recognized for his versatility, dramatic intelligence, and enduring presence on leading opera stages across the United States and abroad. A celebrated artist of San Francisco Opera, where he has performed for more than three decades, Skinner has appeared in over 50 roles and more than 400 performances, establishing himself as a cornerstone of the company's comprimario and principal roster alike. His expansive repertoire spans from Mozart, Verdi, and Puccini to major 20th- and 21st-century works, with notable appearances in premieres such as Philip Glass's *Appomattox* and Allen Shearer's *Middlemarch in Spring*. He has also been heard at major houses including the Metropolitan Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, as well as in concert with ensembles such as the San Francisco Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic. Praised for a voice described as "robust and richly colored" with a strong dramatic presence, Skinner is equally valued for his intellectual approach to character development and his ability to bring nuance and specificity to a wide range of roles, from villains such as Scarpia and Iago to noble figures like King Philip and Wotan. Skinner began his professional career as an Adler Fellow with San Francisco Opera and has remained a vital part of the Bay Area operatic landscape ever since. His work continues to reflect a rare combination of vocal longevity, interpretive depth, and commitment to both standard and contemporary repertoire.

### **Pasquale Esposito**

Internationally acclaimed Italian tenor, recording artist, and producer, **Pasquale Esposito** is known for his passionate interpretations of classical crossover repertoire and Neapolitan song. Born in Naples, Italy, Esposito has built an international career that bridges opera, classical crossover, and contemporary Italian music, performing for audiences across Europe and the United States. After moving to the United States and continuing his musical studies, Esposito trained in vocal performance at San José State University, where he studied under Professor Joseph Frank. His artistic

development has been shaped by both classical operatic training and a deep connection to the musical traditions of his native Naples. Esposito has released numerous albums that celebrate Italian musical heritage, including *Il Tempo, Naples... That's Amore!*, and his widely recognized PBS concert specials such as *Pasquale Esposito Celebrates Enrico Caruso* and *Pasquale Esposito Celebrates Italian Piazzas*. His work has been featured on public television nationally, introducing new audiences to Italian opera and song through cinematic, story-driven performances. In addition to his recording career, Esposito has performed internationally in concert venues and symphonic collaborations, often blending orchestral arrangements with popular Neapolitan classics and operatic arias. His artistry is distinguished by its emotional immediacy, vocal warmth, and commitment to preserving and reimagining Italian musical tradition for contemporary audiences. Esposito continues to divide his time between Europe and the United States, where he also contributes to cultural and educational initiatives supporting music and the arts.

### **Victoria McDowell**

Vietnamese American soprano **Victoria McDowell** is recognized for her vibrant artistry, multilingual vocal ability, and dynamic stage presence. Based in the Bay Area, she is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance at San José State University, where she continues to develop a performance practice that bridges classical opera, concert repertoire, and culturally rooted musical storytelling. A versatile young artist, McDowell performs fluently in multiple languages and is also an accomplished instrumentalist, playing both piano and violin. Her performances have taken her to a wide range of community, civic, and international stages, including appearances at major public events in San José and a featured performance in Naples, Italy for a nationally televised PBS production. She was previously honored by the San José City Council with the title “Voice of San Jose, Jr.” and later recognized as “The Voice of the Capital of Silicon Valley,” reflecting her growing visibility as a cultural ambassador through music. Known for her confident stage presence and expressive vocalism, McDowell is equally committed to artistic excellence and community engagement. She continues to develop her repertoire while performing throughout the Bay Area and beyond, bringing a distinctive blend of technical skills, cultural identity, and youthful artistry to the operatic stage.

### **Joseph Marcheso**

American conductor and music director, **Joseph Marcheso** is recognized for his dynamic leadership and artistic vision in contemporary opera. He currently serves as music director and principal conductor of Opera San José, a position he has held since 2014, where he has led more than 25 productions and helped shape the company into a nationally recognized center for emerging operatic talent. Since joining the company, Marcheso has been instrumental in elevating its orchestral and operatic profile through critically acclaimed productions and new works, including the world premiere of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the West Coast premiere of *Silent Night*, and major productions such as *Moby-Dick*, *Carmen*, and *Madama Butterfly*. His work is closely aligned with OSJ’s mission of developing young artists, expanding access to opera, and reimagining the art form for contemporary audiences. In addition to his work at OSJ, Marcheso has served on the conducting staff of the San Francisco Opera, where he has collaborated on a wide range of repertoire, including major Wagner, Strauss, Britten, and Adams operas, as well as numerous world premieres. Marcheso is also known for his commitment to education and mentorship, including the creation of OSJ’s Resident Conductor program, which provides early-career conductors with hands-on professional training in full-season opera production. Marcheso continues to be an influential figure in the

American opera landscape, balancing an active conducting career with a focus on artistic development, innovation, and expanding access to the operatic art form.

### **ABOUT THE MUNICIPAL ROSE GARDEN**

Known as "America's Best Rose Garden", **The San Jose Municipal Rose Garden** is a historic and beloved public garden in the heart of San Jose's Rose Garden neighborhood, spanning about five and a half acres and dedicated exclusively to roses. The Rose Garden features thousands of rose bushes representing nearly 200 varieties, with vibrant blooms and fragrant paths that draw visitors from around the region—especially in the springtime and early summer. The beautiful venue offers rolling green lawns, a central fountain, and a peaceful setting ideal for walks, photography, and special moments like engagements or quiet afternoons surrounded by color and scent.

### **ABOUT OPERA SAN JOSÉ**

**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 broadcasts digital productions from its state-of-the-art Heiman Digital Media Studio, and performs regularly in its community, providing access to the arts to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. 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).

### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** **Opera San José** invites the community to celebrate the joy of live music under the summer sky at *Opera in the Rose Garden*, a free outdoor concert **featuring the acclaimed Opera San José Orchestra** under the direction of OSJ Music Director and conductor **Joseph Marcheso**. Presented in the country's most celebrated municipal rose garden, the event is underwritten by Applied Materials and the San José Sports Authority as part of SJ26's celebration of the FIFA World Cup, showcasing San José as a global destination for both world-class sporting events and world-class opera. The evening will feature beloved selections from *Die Fledermaus*, *Pagliacci*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, *The Pearl Fishers*, and more, performed by an all-star lineup of Opera San José artists and guest performers including internationally acclaimed Italian tenor **Pasquale Esposito** and "The Voice of the Capital of Silicon Valley," soprano **Victoria McDowell**.

**WHEN:** **Saturday, June 20, 2026**  
Check-in: 5:00pm  
Concert: 6:00pm to 7:30pm

**WHERE:** **Municipal Rose Garden**, 1649 Naglee Ave, San Jose

**TICKETS:** **FREE**

**INFO:** For more information, the public can visit [operasj.org](http://operasj.org) or call **408-437-4450** (open Monday through Friday, 11:00am–5:30pm).

**MEDIA:** Contact Paige D'Encarnacao, CBCO Public Relations & Marketing  
[paige@cb-pr.com](mailto:paige@cb-pr.com) | 415-570-2623

**PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos will be available here:  
[cbpr.co/press/operaintherosegarden](http://cbpr.co/press/operaintherosegarden)