

OPERA SAN JOSÉ ANNOUNCES 2026-27 ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

EMERGING ARTISTS TO HEADLINE PRODUCTIONS ACROSS THE SEASON

SAN JOSÉ, CA (18 June 2026) — **Opera San José** General Director & CEO **Shawna Lucey** has announced the 2026–27 Artists-in-Residence, a group of distinguished opera professionals who will perform in the company’s four mainstage productions at the California Theatre throughout the upcoming season, launching September 13 with Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*. For more information or to purchase subscriptions (\$147 - \$747), the public can visit operasj.org or call 408-437-4450 (open Monday through Friday, 11:00am–5:30pm).

“Opera San José has long believed that the world’s great stages belong to the artists who dare to inhabit them fully — and our incoming Artists-in-Residence represent the most thrilling cohort we have had the privilege to welcome,” said Opera San José General Director & CEO **Shawna Lucey**. “As our founder Irene Dalis declared, we are proud to export stars. Hear them here first. Experience the transcendent artistic journey that begins on our stage and then watch them illuminate concert halls and opera houses around the world.”

This season’s selected artists are **María Brea** (soprano), **Shanley Horvitz** (soprano), **Rodrigo Gonzalez Jacob** (conductor), **Nicole Koh** (soprano), **Michael Jesse Kuo** (baritone), **Phillip Lopez** (bass-baritone), **Courtney Miller** (mezzo-soprano), **David Morgans** (tenor), **Micah Perry** (tenor), **Melissa Sondhi** (soprano), **Wm. Clay Thompson** (bass), and **Mark Anthony Vallejo** (director). More information about each of the artists is below.

Recognized as a leading force in cultivating and nurturing emerging opera talent, Opera San José’s **Artist-in-Residence Program** serves as a thriving incubator, providing a fertile environment where promising artists can flourish and develop their skills to their fullest potential. Focused on giving the opera stars of tomorrow their “firsts,” OSJ puts rising artists center stage, on the podium, and in the director’s chair. Each Artist-in-Resident receives a personalized mentorship, allowing them to refine their technique while experimenting and exploring their artistic range. Additionally, OSJ’s Artist-in-Residence program provides free housing to its artists during their residency, an uncommon and significant commitment in a city with the highest price-to-rent ratio in the country. This benefit allows artists from around the country and the world to live and work in the heart of Silicon Valley. From mainstage productions to community engagements, Artists-in-Residence showcase their talents to diverse audiences in the theatre, the digital sphere, and in the community, gaining invaluable stage experience while building their professional portfolios.

All the Artists-in-Residence will be featured throughout Opera San José’s 43rd season, an exciting lineup that includes beloved operatic classics, a groundbreaking American musical, and the company’s first-ever opera by John Adams. The 2026–27 season opens with Mozart’s vivid retelling of the Don Juan legend, *Don Giovanni* (September 13–27, 2026). This masterful *dramma giocosa*, a blend of comedy and drama, follows the downfall of an arrogant and reckless serial philanderer. Later in the fall, OSJ will present the musical that revolutionized American theater, *Fiddler on the Roof* (November 15–29, 2026). Winner of nine Tony Awards, the beloved musical became the longest-

running production in Broadway history at the time of its premiere, holding that distinction for a decade. The new year begins with the company's first-ever John Adams opera, *Doctor Atomic* (February 14–28, 2027), presented in a new production honoring the renowned Berkeley-based composer's 80th birthday. Featuring a libretto by Peter Sellars, the opera explores the intense psychological, moral, and technical pressures surrounding the creation of the first atomic bomb. The season concludes with Bizet's passionate and dramatic masterpiece, *Carmen* (April 18–May 2, 2027). This tragic opera follows a soldier whose obsession with the fiery and free-spirited title character leads to devastating consequences. Featuring a roster of celebrated artists alongside exciting company debuts, Opera San José's 43rd season showcases an extraordinary range of works spanning operatic masterpieces, groundbreaking contemporary repertoire, and iconic musical theater.

ARTIST BIOS

María Brea (soprano)

Praised by *OperaWire* for her “virtuosity as a singer” and “luxurious polish,” and hailed as a “fantastic soprano,” Venezuelan soprano **María Brea** returned to Arizona Opera in the 2025–26 season to reprise the role of Ana María Soza in *Zorro*. In the same season, she joined Opera in Williamsburg as the title role in *Orfeo ed Euridice* and made her Austin Opera debut as Mimì in *La Bohème*. Her additional highlights include her American Ballet Theatre debut in the U.S. premiere of *Like Water for Chocolate* at The Metropolitan Opera, as well as her Carnegie Hall debut as the soprano soloist in *Carmina Burana* with the Cecilia Chorus of New York. She has also appeared with Opera San José as Ana María in *Zorro* and as First Lady in *The Magic Flute*. Brea was a finalist in the 2022 Paris Competition and competed in the 2021 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition. She is a recipient of awards from the Opera Cultura, Gerda Lissner, Giulio Gari, Mary Truman Art Song, and New York Lyric Opera competitions, and received an encouragement award from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Connecticut District Auditions.

Shanley Horvitz (soprano)

After appearances throughout Europe, soprano **Shanley Horvitz** made her American debut as Meg Page in *Falstaff* with Opera San José, where she also earned second place in the company's Irene Dalis Competition. She was additionally featured portraying Irene Dalis in OSJ's digital fundraiser celebrating the company's artistic legacy. Her other performance credits include the title role in *La Vestale* with Teatro Grattacielo, as well as appearances in Vienna at Palais Ehrbar with the PolyMuse Orchestra. She is a featured performer in the Candlelight Concerts series throughout the Philadelphia and New Jersey region.

Rodrigo Gonzalez Jacob (conductor)

Argentine conductor **Rodrigo Gonzalez Jacob** specializes in orchestral, ballet, and operatic repertoire. He previously served as chief conductor of the Academic Orchestra of the National University of the Arts (UNA), where he led more than one hundred symphonic and operatic productions. He also held the position of associate conductor of the National Symphonic Band for the Blind and has appeared as a guest conductor at major international festivals, including the Youth Orchestra of the Americas (YOA), the Isla Verde Bronces International Festival, and the Juvenile Philharmonic Festival. Jacob has collaborated with ensembles including the Oregon Symphony, Eugene Opera, Eugene Symphony, Eugene Ballet, Anchorage Symphony, Opera San José, Orchestra Next, Opera in Williamsburg, the Alabama Symphony, and the Oregon Mozart Players. He currently serves as assistant conductor of Eugene Ballet and music director of the Promusica Foundation. His

artistic training includes advanced study and mentorship with the National Symphony Orchestra of Argentina, the Teatro Colón, and the Federal Conducting Fellowship program.

Nicole Koh (soprano)

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

Michael Jesse Kuo (baritone)

Praised by *Opera Tattler* for his “bright and robust lyrical voice and spirited stage presence,” Taiwanese baritone **Michael Jesse Kuo** has performed throughout the United States and Europe. In the 2025–26 season at Opera San José, he covered Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Alfio and Silvio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, and performed the role of the Marchese while also covering Germont in *La Traviata*. Kuo has appeared with companies including San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera Studio Weimar, Pocket Opera, San Francisco Opera Guild, and West Edge Opera. His repertoire includes Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore*, Schaunard and Marullo in *La Bohème*, Papageno and Second Priest in *The Magic Flute*, Officer in *The Barber of Seville*, and Marullo in *Rigoletto*.

Phillip Lopez (bass-baritone)

Described by *Opera News* as “destined for a major career,” baritone **Phillip Lopez** is earning growing acclaim in both new and established repertoire across the United States. In the 2026–27 season, he will appear as Le Temps/Adonis in Rameau's *Les surprises de L'amour* with Opera Lafayette. His past credits include Curio in *Giulio Cesare* and Schaunard in *La Bohème* with St. Petersburg Opera Company, Abdul in *The Last Savage* with Odyssey Opera, and Sid and José Castro in *La fanciulla del West* with Wichita Grand Opera. He made his Carnegie Hall debut as the bass soloist in Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*. Signature roles in his repertoire include Angelotti in *Tosca* and Zuniga in *Carmen*. Lopez can also be heard on several studio recordings, including *The Last Savage* with Odyssey Opera and the Boston Modern Opera Project. He is a two-time district winner of The Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition.

Courtney Miller (mezzo-soprano)

Praised for her “captivating stage presence” (*South Florida Classical Review*), “fluent musicality” (*Opera News*), and “excellent sense of comic timing” (*The Washington Times*), mezzo-soprano **Courtney Miller** will appear in June as Ruggiero in *Alcina* with Festival Opera and the San Francisco Early Music Society. Her additional credits include Despina in *Così Fan Tutte* with Livermore Valley Opera, Elmire in *Tartuffe* with Pocket Opera, Warren's Wife in *The Handmaid's Tale* with San Francisco Opera, Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera, and Berta in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Opera San José. She has also performed with Florida Grand Opera, Detroit Opera, Madison Opera, and aboard Azamara Club Cruises. An award-winning recitalist, Miller is recognized for curating narrative-driven programs that often highlight works by female composers. She is also a dedicated arts educator, working with the San Francisco Opera Guild and touring her children's recital, *How's it bee?*

David Morgans (tenor)

Three-time Grammy Award–winning tenor **David Morgans** will also serve as a Generational Voices Fellow with the Denyce Graves Foundation in the 2026–27 season. His credits include Narraboth in *Salome* with Heartbeat Opera; covering Kevin Richardson in *The Central Park Five* at Detroit Opera; Third Jew in *Salome* with Union Avenue Opera; and a featured appearance in a semi-staged concert with Metro Opera Tech at the Kaufmann Center in New York City. Additional highlights include Ally in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the Metropolitan Opera, Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* with Opera Baltimore, and Nate in *Highway 1 USA* at St Stephens Festival Opera.

At the Metropolitan Opera, Morgans has appeared as Pledge in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, Prayer in *Porgy and Bess*, and in Terrence Blanchard’s *Champion*. All three productions received Grammy Awards for Best Opera Recording. He can be seen as Julio (tenor) in the feature film “She Came to Me,” directed by Rebecca Miller, alongside Anne Hathaway, Peter Dinklage, and Marisa Tomei.

Micah Perry (tenor)

In the 2025–26 season, tenor **Micah Perry** covered the role of Ferrando in *Così Fan Tutte* and performed Beppe in *Pagliacci* with Opera San José. That same season, he also appeared as Will Parker in *Oklahoma!* with Pensacola Opera, following his 2024–25 engagement as a Jan Miller Studio Artist with the company, where he sang Don Basilio, Curzio, and Beppe in mainstage productions. In the summer of 2025, Perry was a Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and returned this summer as a Gerdine Young Artist, currently performing with the company as Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*. He has also appeared with Wolf Trap Opera, Austin Opera, American Baroque Opera, Landlocked Opera, Quisisana Resort, and Festival Napa Valley. Perry is a recipient of Second Place in the 2025 Gulf Coast Region Laffont Competition.

Melissa Sondhi (soprano)

Praised for her “charm” (*San Francisco Chronicle*) and for “time and again sing(ing) with a voice that is nothing short of wow(ing)” (*Theatre Eddys*), Indian American soprano **Melissa Sondhi** is an emerging artist on the rise. In the 2025–26 season, she made her European debut with Parma OperArt, performing in concerts in both Tallinn, Estonia, and Busseto, Italy. That same season, she also made her Ars Minerva debut, performing the roles of Venere and Pasithea in the West Coast premiere of Antonia Bembo’s *Ercole Amante*. Sondhi has appeared with Opera San José as the inaugural recipient of the Wadhvani Chair for South Asian Artists in roles including Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Musetta (*La Bohème*), and Pamina (*The Magic Flute*). She has also been seen with Pocket Opera as Adele (*Die Fledermaus*) and Mariane (*Tartuffe*). In 2025, she was a semifinalist in the prestigious Loren L. Zachary Competition, and in 2023 she won first place in the Adult Classical Voice category at the Los Angeles Semifinals of the Music International Grand Prix Competition.

Wm. Clay Thompson (bass)

Praised by *Opera News* for his “mahogany-timbred” voice and “imposing presence,” bass **Wm. Clay Thompson** is emerging as one of the most promising artists of his generation. In the 2026–27 season, he will perform Oroveso in *Norma* with Madison Opera. His 2025–26 season engagements included Colline in *La Bohème* with Madison Opera; Mark Torrance/Forest Ranger in *The Shining* with Nashville Opera; Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Charleston Opera Theater; Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Finger Lakes Opera; and bass soloist in *Defiant Requiem* with the Syracuse Orchestra. An alumnus of the Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Ryan Opera Center, his mainstage credits there included

the King in *Aida*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, and Chevalier Deux in *Le Comte Ory*, as well as cover roles such as Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*, Rychtar in *Jenůfa*, and Arnie Duncan in the world premiere of *Proximity*. His performance history spans major companies including The Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Minnesota Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and Château de Versailles Spectacles.

Mark Anthony Vallejo (director)

A native of East Los Angeles, stage director **Mark Anthony Vallejo** was named the JoElyn Wakefield-Wright Stage Director Fellow by the National Opera Association for the 2026–27 season. Vallejo first gained operatic experience assisting Paul Houghtaling on *Carmen* at Music on Site, Inc. He went on to become a two-time finalist for The Metropolitan Opera’s Stage Directing Fellowship (2023 and 2024), including participation in a weeklong intensive for Carrie Cracknell’s *Carmen*. He made his Opera San José debut in fall 2024, assisting Michelle Cuizon on *La Bohème*. His broader theatrical training includes working with The Actors’ Gang and an internship with CONTRA-TIEMPO. He has also assisted productions at Chance Theater and South Coast Repertory. Additional credits include assisting Bill Rauch on *La Commedia of Errors* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and co-directing *La Víctima* with José Luis Valenzuela at the Latino Theater Company.

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.

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 Theatre is comparable to England’s Glyndebourne and Venice’s historic Teatro La Fenice in the select ranks of the world’s most intimate opera houses.

-30-

MEDIA: Contact Paige D’Encarnacao, CBCO Public Relations & Marketing
paige@cb-pr.com | 415-570-2623

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here: <http://cbpr.co/press/OSJAIR26-27>