

OPERA SAN JOSÉ OPENS 43RD SEASON WITH
MOZART'S MASTERPIECE

DON GIOVANNI

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte

September 13-27, 2026

SAN JOSÉ, CA (18 August 2026) — Opera San José's 43rd season opens with a fresh and electrifying new production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, reimagining the classic tale as a dark psychological thriller that follows a powerful aristocrat spiraling out of control. The opera follows the infamous Don Giovanni as he tears through high society, exploring the brutal consequences of unchecked power. Opera San José's production examines dangerous obsession, manipulation, and the explosive, supernatural justice that awaits a ruthless man who finally pushes too far. Internationally renowned tenor **Alek Shrader**, who directed last season's *Così Fan Tutte*, helms this production, with OSJ Music Director and Principal Conductor **Joseph Marcheso** leading the orchestra through one of Mozart's most celebrated scores. *Don Giovanni* will be performed in Italian with English and Spanish supertitles **September 13-27, 2026** (*performance dates/times below*) at the **California Theatre**, 345 South First Street, San José. For more information or to purchase tickets (\$49 to \$249, plus \$3.50 fee per ticket with walk up student tickets available every performance for \$10 with a student ID), the public may visit operasj.org or call **408-437-4450** (open Monday through Friday, 11:00am to 5:30pm).

Said Opera San José General Director & CEO **Shawna Lucey**, "There is no better way to throw open the doors on a new season than with one of the towering masterpieces of the operatic canon. *Don Giovanni* is Mozart at his most electrifying, seduction, damnation, and razor-sharp wit bound together in music of staggering brilliance, with characters so vivid they've haunted and delighted audiences for more than two centuries." Lucey added, "And having the incomparable Alek Shrader turn his hand to the comedy of Giovanni will be both hilarious and poignant, he finds the humanity inside the humor in a way few artists can. We cannot wait to welcome audiences back to the California Theatre for a night that promises all the excitement, beauty, and raw power of live opera. This is how you start a season, and how you bring a community together."

Artist-in-Residence bass **Wm. Clay Thompson** makes his Opera San José debut in the title role of *Don Giovanni*, portraying Mozart's infamous libertine. Bay Area favorite bass **Kenneth Kellogg** appears as the Commendatore, a respected nobleman whose murder at the hands of Don Giovanni sets the opera's events in motion. Soprano **Yulan Piao** stars as Donna Anna, the noblewoman whose determination to avenge her father's murder drives the opera's emotional and dramatic stakes. Tenor **Jonghyun Park** joins the cast as the naïve yet well-intentioned Don Ottavio, following his previous Opera San José appearance as Ferrando in *Così Fan Tutte*. Artist-in-Residence soprano **María Brea**, who received critical acclaim for her portrayal of Ana Maria Soza in OSJ's *Zorro*, takes on the role of

the passionate and determined Donna Elvira. Artist-in-Residence bass-baritone **Phillip Lopez** appears as Leporello, Don Giovanni's sharp-tongued servant who chronicles his master's endless conquests while desperately trying to avoid becoming entangled in the chaos they leave behind. Rounding out the cast are Artist-in-Residence soprano **Nicole Koh** as Zerlina, a clever and captivating young bride-to-be whose playful charm and inner strength help her navigate Don Giovanni's seductive schemes, and bass-baritone **Joseph Park** as Masetto, Zerlina's devoted but hot-tempered fiancé whose jealousy and determination to protect the woman he loves place him in direct conflict with Don Giovanni.

The chorus ensemble is comprised of soprano **Rachel Beninghof**, soprano **Phoebe Chee**, baritone **Ethan Chu**, baritone **Christopher Abadia Contreras**, mezzo-soprano **Leah Finn**, soprano **Madison Hatten**, bass **Tres Hunter**, mezzo-soprano **Danielle Imai**, soprano **Kyounghee Lee**, tenor **Eric Mellum**, and tenor **Micah Perry**, and tenor **Luis Tuyub**. The supernumeraries include **Paige D'Encarnacao**, **Tracy Fuller**, **Marie Alexandra Ibarra**, and **Stephanie Melchor**.

The creative team for *Don Giovanni* includes **Alek Shrader** (Director), **Joseph Marcheso** (Conductor), **Rodrigo Gonzalez Jacob** (Assistant Conductor/Chorus Master), **Mark Anthony Vallejo** (Assistant Director), **Jenise Catrone** (Stage Manager), **Steven C. Kemp** (Set Designer), **Eric Watkins** (Lighting Designer), **Calli Carvajal** (Hair and Makeup Designer), **Caitlin Cisek** (Costume Designer), **Brandon DiPaola** (Fight Choreographer).

Don Giovanni, which premiered on October 29, 1787, in Prague, features one of Mozart's most acclaimed arias, "Madamina, il catalogo è questo," as well as other favorites including "Non mi dir," "Il mio Tesoro," and the love duet, "Là ci darem la mano." The two-act opera follows the charismatic yet ruthless manipulator as he destroys everyone in his path for the thrill of the chase, culminating in a visceral reckoning when his fate is sealed.

ARTIST BIOS:

Wm. Clay Thompson (Don Giovanni)

Praised by *Opera News* for his "mahogany-timbred" voice and "imposing presence," American bass **Wm. Clay Thompson** is recognized as one of the country's rising operatic talents. During the 2026–27 season, Thompson makes debuts with Virginia Opera as Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Charleston Opera Theatre as Colline in *La Bohème*, North Carolina Opera as Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Sioux City Symphony as Zuniga in *Carmen*, and Camerata Chicago as the bass soloist in Mozart's *Requiem*. A recipient of the Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation, Thompson is a graduate of the Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago, where he appeared as the King in *Aida* and covered roles in *Jenùfa* and *La Cenerentola*. He previously was a Resident Artist with Minnesota Opera and has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Arizona Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Fort Worth Opera, and The Glimmerglass Festival.

Kenneth Kellogg (Commendatore)

During the 2026–27 season, bass **Kenneth Kellogg** appears as Ramfis and Il Re in *Aida* and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. Career highlights include his San Francisco Opera debut as Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Doctor Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Maryland Lyric Opera, Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* with Seattle Opera, Rocco in *Fidelio* with North Carolina Opera, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Madison Opera, and Ulderico and Zenovito in Rossini's *Sigismondo* with Capella Cracoviensis in Kraków, Poland. Kellogg created the role of Father Blue in

Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson's *Blue* at The Glimmerglass Festival and has since reprised the role with Detroit Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, and on the Washington National Opera recording before making the work's European premiere in Amsterdam. A native of Washington, D.C., Kellogg trained with Academy of Vocal Arts, Merola Opera Program, San Francisco Opera's Adler Fellowship, and the Domingo-Cafritz Emerging Artist Program at Washington National Opera.

Yulan Piao (Donna Anna)

Praised by *Arts Knoxville* for her “beautiful lyrical clarity” and “crystalline coloratura,” Korean Chinese soprano **Yulan Piao** makes her Boston Lyric Opera debut during the 2026–27 season as Cio-Cio San in *Madama Butterfly*. She also performs the role with the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra and appears as the soprano soloist in Mozart’s *Requiem* at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center. She previously made her Opera San José debut as Dan in the world premiere of *Zheng*, her San Francisco Opera debut as Princess Jia in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and her Sarasota Opera debut as Sandrina in Haydn’s *L’infedeltà delusa*. Piao has performed leading roles including Juliet in *Roméo et Juliette*, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Liu in *Turandot*, Musetta and Mimì in *La Bohème*, and Gilda in *Rigoletto*. She has appeared with Knoxville Opera, New Jersey Association of Verismo Opera, New Rochelle Opera, and Fort Worth Opera. Piao is the recipient of numerous competition awards, including the Career Bridges Grant Award, the Giulio Gari Foundation Encouragement Grant, third prize in the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition, and first prize in both the Verismo Opera Competition and Vienna Summer Music Festival Competition.

Jonghyun Park (Don Ottavio)

As a former participant in the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera, Korean tenor **Jonghyun Park** performed the First Prisoner and covered the role of Jaquino in *Fidelio* and sang the Sergeant in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with the company. He also appeared with The Philadelphia Orchestra under Maestro Yannick Nézet-Séguin, singing the role of the Shepherd and the Sailor in a concert production of *Tristan und Isolde*. Park made his Met debut as the First Guard in the company’s holiday production of *The Magic Flute* and previously covered the role of Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette*. Other engagements include Fenton in *Falstaff* with Opera San José, covering Fenton with Palm Beach Opera, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* as part of the Merola Opera Program’s Schwabacher Summer Concert Series, and Nemorino in *L’elisir d’amore* with Yale Opera. On the concert stage, Park has appeared as the tenor soloist in Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* with New Choral Society, Handel’s *Messiah* with the Brandford Chamber Orchestra, and Mozart’s *Requiem* with the Waterbury Symphony. A recipient of the Fritz Wunderlich Award from the 2024 Opera Index Vocal Competition, Park trained with Merola Opera Program and the Académie du Festival d’Aix-en-Provence.

María Brea (Donna Elvira)

Praised by *OperaWire* as a “fantastic soprano” with “virtuosity as a singer” and “luxurious polish,” Venezuelan soprano **María Brea** has made debuts with the Phoenix Symphony as the soprano soloist in Handel’s *Messiah*, the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra in Odaline de la Martinez’s *Four Afro-Cuban Poems*, Arizona Opera as Ana María in *Zorro*, and Vero Beach Opera as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. She previously made her debut as a soloist with American Ballet Theatre in the U.S. premiere of *Like Water for Chocolate* at the Metropolitan Opera and in California. A finalist in the 2022 Paris Competition, Brea also participated in the 2021 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition and won sixth prize in the Tenor Viñas Contest, where she received a special award for

Best Interpreter of Zarzuela and a contract to perform with the orchestra at Teatro Liceu de Barcelona. As a concert soloist, she has appeared with the Indianapolis Symphony, Oratorio Society of New York, Tucson Symphony, Boston Philharmonic Youth Symphony, Richmond Symphony, and Queens Symphony Orchestra, performing works including Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, Mahler's Symphony No. 2, and Haydn's *The Creation*. She also performed as the soprano soloist in *Carmina Burana* with the Cecilia Chorus of New York at Carnegie Hall.

Phillip Lopez (Leporello)

Praised by *Opera News* for his “resonant bass-baritone” and as “a performer to watch for on the operatic horizon,” bass-baritone **Phillip Lopez** recently performed with Wichita Grand Opera as Chino in *West Side Story*, Curio in *Giulio Cesare* with St. Pete Opera Company, made his company debut with Odyssey Opera as Abdul in *The Last Savage*, and debuted at Carnegie Hall as bass soloist in Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*, and returned to St. Petersburg Opera as Schaunard in *La Bohème*. A former Artist in Residence with Opera Colorado, Studio Artist with Florida Grand Opera, and Apprentice Artist with Chautauqua Opera Company and Des Moines Metro Opera, Lopez has performed with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Opera Southwest, West Edge Opera, Central City Opera, and The Glimmerglass Festival. Lopez is a two-time Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition district winner.

Joseph Park (Masetto)

During the 2025–26 season, Bass-baritone **Joseph (Yoseph) Park** appeared with Opera San José as a cover for Tonio in *Pagliacci*, returned to Fort Worth Opera as Prince Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly* and Balthazar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, made his Park City Opera debut as Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and performed as the bass soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Chattanooga Symphony Orchestra. A 2025 Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera, Park performed The Keeper of the Madhouse in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* and covered Daland in Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*. He previously was a Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he appeared as Angelotti in *Tosca* and Elder Ott in *Susannah*. A former Resident Artist with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Park has also performed with the Aspen Music Festival.

Nicole Koh (Zerlina)

Opera San José Artist-in-Residence soprano **Nicole Koh**, a native of Daly City, California, returns to the company following her acclaimed performances as both the Queen of the Night and Papagena in *The Magic Flute* last season. Her recent credits include Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* with Chautauqua Opera, the title role in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* with the Chautauqua Opera Conservatory, and Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*. She has also performed the title role in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and covered the role of Winnie in *Sky on Swings*.

Alek Shrader (Director)

An internationally acclaimed tenor, stage director, and arts administrator, **Alek Shrader** previously directed Opera San José's acclaimed production of *Così Fan Tutte* last season. A 2007 Merola Opera Program alumnus and former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow, Shrader has performed with leading companies including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and Opera Philadelphia, as well as at the Salzburg and Glyndebourne festivals. His celebrated roles include Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore*, Ferrando in *Così Fan Tutte*, and Alfredo in *La Traviata*. A

winner of the 2007 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Shrader has also expanded his career into directing.

Joseph Marcheso (Conductor)

Music Director and Principal Conductor of Opera San José, **Joseph Marcheso** has led more than 25 productions since his appointment in 2014. His work with the company has included critically acclaimed productions and premieres, including *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Silent Night*, *Moby-Dick*, and the Bay Area premiere of *Florecia en el Amazonas*. Marcheso has also served on the conducting staff of San Francisco Opera, where he has worked on productions spanning Wagner, Strauss, Britten, and Adams, including several world premieres. Marcheso is also the creator of Opera San José's Resident Conductor program, which provides emerging conductors with professional experience rehearsing and conducting opera alongside established artists.

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.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **Opera San José's** 43rd season opens with a fresh and electrifying new production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, a dark psychological thriller about a wealthy aristocrat spiraling out of control. The opera follows the infamous Don Giovanni as he tears through high society, exploring the brutal consequences of unchecked power. Opera San José's production examines dangerous obsession, manipulation, and the explosive, supernatural justice that awaits a ruthless man who finally pushes too far. Internationally renowned tenor **Alek Shrader**, who directed last season's *Così Fan Tutte*, helms this production, with OSJ Music Director and Principal Conductor **Joseph Marcheso** leading the orchestra through one of Mozart's most celebrated scores.

WHEN: **September 13–27, 2026**

WHERE: **California Theatre, 345 S 1st St, San José**

TICKETS: **\$58–\$215** (*plus \$3.50 fee per ticket*)

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

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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos will be available here: cbpr.co/press/dongiovanni