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Opera Colorado Opens 2018-19 Season with Verdi's Romantic Tragedy *La Traviata*

**Set in 1850s Paris, this production marks the company's
first *La Traviata* in ten years**

**Performances run Nov 3-11, 2018, at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House
at the Denver Performing Arts Complex**

DENVER—Opera Colorado opens its 2018-19 season in just a few weeks, with an **opulent production** of Verdi's *La Traviata*—one of the most beloved operatic works of all time. The production **opens Saturday, November 3**, at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House with additional performances on **November 6, 9, and 11**.

This Romantic masterpiece overflows with Verdi's brilliant melodies—including the instantly recognizable *brindisi*, or “drinking song”—and features one of opera's greatest heroines: the doomed courtesan Violetta, who sacrifices everything for the sake of true love.

“In *La Traviata*, Verdi created what has become the model of Italian opera,” says **Opera Colorado Music Director Ari Pelto**, whose “breathtaking wizardry in the pit” (*The Denver Post*) is consistently lauded whether at Opera Colorado or at engagements across the country. “That has to do with this incredible character of Violetta, who is not only one of the strongest, most poignant and most tragic characters in all of opera, but is also very vocally iconic.”

Taking on the role of Violetta in her **Opera Colorado debut** is acclaimed **soprano Cecilia Violetta López**, who has been praised by *The New York Times* for her “flirtatious charm and

intriguingly dusky voice,” and whose deep emotional connection to Violetta has turned the role into one of her signature performances.

“I identify a lot with Violetta,” explains López. “I’ve gone through my own life putting up walls, going through life saying, ‘I’m a strong woman.’ And I am. But at the same time, there’s a vulnerable side of me, and of Violetta, that wants to be loved but is afraid. Granted, I’m not dying of tuberculosis like she is! But I find that even more admirable, because she’s dying and she’s *still* fighting. *La Traviata* is a very feminine, strong opera, and I think Violetta embodies all those qualities that I would like to embody, too.”

Singing opposite López is **tenor Eric Barry**, returning to Opera Colorado as the naïve Alfredo, who dismisses society’s disapproval of their relationship and is unaware of the harsh toll it imposes on the already-ill Violetta. Rounding out the principal cast is **baritone Malcolm MacKenzie** as Alfredo’s stern father, Germont, who aims to keep the lovers apart.

Opera Colorado audiences will recognize Barry from the 2017 run of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, in which he “delivered the finest singing in [the] production” (*Opera News*); and MacKenzie from the 2016 world premiere of Lori Laitman’s *The Scarlett Letter*, in which his “confident baritone and dynamic presence” were on display (*Opera News*).

“It really is a production filled with extraordinary singing,” says **General & Artistic Director Greg Carpenter**.

“This cast has immense vocal talent, but they also have the dramatic skill to bring these characters to life—both through their musicianship and their sensitivity as actors. This is a love story not just between Violetta and Alfredo, but also between a father and a son. And Cecilia, Eric and Malcolm all understand how to make those relationships come alive in an honest way.”

Rounding out the cast are **Opera Colorado’s 2018-19 Artists in Residence***, most of whom make their mainstage company debuts with *La Traviata*. **Also making her Opera Colorado debut: stage director Alison Moritz**, who brings her “elegantly sexy” (*Opera News*) approach to Verdi’s classic tale of passion.

Tickets start at just \$25 for Verdi’s *La Traviata*, opening Saturday, November 3, and running through Sunday, November 11.

Two-opera subscriptions, combining *La Traviata* and Opera Colorado’s spring production of *The Marriage of Figaro*, start at just \$38.

For tickets and information, visit operacolorado.org or call the Opera Colorado Box Office at 303.468.2030.

**Prior to the 2018-19 season, the Opera Colorado Artist in Residence Program was known as the Opera Colorado Young Artist Program.*

LA TRAVIATA

Composed by Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

November 3, 6, 9, and 11, 2018

The Ellie Caulkins Opera House at the Denver Performing Arts Complex

Cast (In Order of Vocal Appearance)

Violetta Valéry	Cecilia López*
Flora Bervoix	Kira Dills-Desurra*^
Marchese d'Obigny	Nicholas Kreider^
Barone Douphol	Edward Laurensen*^
Dr. Grenvil	Eric McConnell*^
Gastone	Aaren Rivard*^
Alfredo Germont	Eric Barry
Annina	Rebekah Howell*^
Giuseppe	Christian Arguello
Giorgio Germont	Malcolm MacKenzie
Commissionario	Matthew Peterson*
Un Uomo	Zeky Nadji

Opera Colorado Orchestra

Opera Colorado Chorus

Conductor	Ari Pelto
Stage Director	Alison Moritz*
Lighting Design	Lucas Krech
Wig and Makeup Design	Ronell Oliveri
Chorus Master & Repetiteur	Sahar Nouri

Costumes designed for Utah Symphony & Opera by Susan Memmott Allred; Scenery designed by Peter Dean Beck for Florida Grand Opera, made available courtesy of Utah Symphony & Utah Opera

*Opera Colorado Debut

^Opera Colorado Artist in Residence

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ABOUT OPERA COLORADO

Opera Colorado has served as a cornerstone of Denver's cultural community since 1981. In addition to its mainstage performances at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House each season, the company affirms its commitment to the future of the art form by annually presenting new works; with its nationally recognized Artist in Residence Program that trains the next generation of opera artists; and by each year reaching more than 45,000 students and adults through its many education and community engagement programs. The 2018-19 season features Verdi's *La Traviata* (November 2018) and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* (May 2019) at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, and a sold-out double-bill of the one-act operas *After Life* and *Josephine* by Tom Cipullo at the Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art (February/March 2019). For more information, visit operacolorado.org.