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Opera Colorado Returns to Live Performance with Puccini's *Tosca*

This production marks the company's first mainstage performance since March 2020

Denver, CO (October 14, 2021)—Starting Saturday, November 6, **Opera Colorado presents *Tosca* at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House** for four performances only. This lavish production of Puccini's operatic blockbuster is Opera Colorado's **first performance at the Ellie Caulkins Opera house since COVID-19 restrictions were put in place in March 2020**, causing all mainstage productions for the next eighteen months to be cancelled or postponed.

General & Artistic Director Greg Carpenter says, “It is so exciting to return to producing live, grand opera at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House this fall, and to finally present the *Tosca* we had to cancel in April 2020. This **stunning, classic production and superb cast, along with the great Opera Colorado Orchestra and Chorus**, will make for a season opener worth waiting for.”

Tosca is a high-stakes thriller filled with political conflict, betrayal, revenge, and love. Audiences are transported to nineteenth-century Rome to experience what the *Denver Post* has called one of “**the most gripping works in opera.**”

The prima donna will be played by renowned soprano **Melissa Citro**, who “exuded grace and nobility...while negotiating some of Puccini’s most demanding vocal requirements” (*Daily Camera*) in Opera Colorado’s 2016 production of *La fanciulla del West*. **Rafael Davila**, one of the most sought-after tenors of his generation, portrays her lover Cavaradossi. **Luis Ledesma** returns as the evil Scarpia after an enchanting performance in Opera Colorado’s *Canciones de Nuestras Tierras* at the Denver Botanic Gardens last spring.

Heralded by *Opera News* for her “absorbing, provocative staging,” **Louisa Muller** makes her Opera Colorado directorial debut, and Music Director **Ari Pelto** leads principal singers, as well as the Opera Colorado Chorus and Orchestra from the podium. We also welcome members of the **Colorado Children’s Chorale**, lending their talent to act one.

Tickets start at \$35 and can be purchased by visiting operacolorado.org/events or by calling 303.468.2030 (press 1). All performances are sung in Italian with English and Spanish subtitles at every seat and English supertitles above the stage.

For more information about Opera Colorado's current and future programming, visit operacolorado.org or contact Jennifer Colgan at jcolgan@operacolorado.org.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Music by Giacomo Puccini
Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

November 6, 9, 12, 14 | 2021

Ellie Caulkins Opera House at the Denver Performing Arts Complex
Performed in Italian, with English and Spanish subtitles at every seat

A High-Stakes Thriller

A corrupt chief of police has a cruel ultimatum for Rome's most celebrated prima donna, Tosca: submit to his lustful desires or trigger the execution of her beloved. Who will survive this web of betrayal and revenge?

Cast

Tosca | Melissa Citro
Cavaradossi | Rafael Davila
Scarpia | Luis Ledesma
Sacristan | Stefano de Peppo

Opera Colorado Chorus
Colorado Children's Chorale
Opera Colorado Orchestra

Creative Team

Conductor | Ari Pelto
Stage Director | Louisa Muller
Scenic Design | Ercole Sormani
Lighting Design | J. Isadora Krech
Sets and costumes provided by Seattle Opera

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Soprano **Melissa Citro**'s most recent engagements include the role of Minnie in *La fanciulla del West* both with Michigan Opera Theatre and Opera Colorado, Marina in Dvořák's rarely heard *Dmitrij* at the Bard Festival, Guttrune in San Francisco Opera's production of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. She also made her Washington Opera debut as Guttrune in *Götterdämmerung*, the roles of Rusalka and Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus* with New Orleans Opera, *La Wally* with the Dallas Opera, and Senta in *The Flying Dutchman* with Lyric Opera Kansas City.



Tenor **Rafael Davila** made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 2017 as Don José in *Carmen*. Other recent engagements include Des Grieux in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* with the San Francisco Opera, the Liceu in Barcelona, and Valencia, Dick Johnson in *La fanciulla del West* with Minnesota Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre, a Zarzuela gala at the Mariinsky, Don José and Verdi's *Don Carlo* with the Washington National Opera, his debut with Lyric Opera of Chicago as General Alfredo in the world premiere of *Bel Canto*, his debut with the Macerata Festival and his return to Teatro San Carlo as Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Canio in *Pagliacci*.



Mexican baritone **Luis Ledesma** has established a reputation as a "rich and well controlled baritone" (*Opera News*). He frequently portrays the heroes and villains of Puccini, Verdi, and the bel canto masters, as well as roles in recent new works in Spanish including *Florencia en el Amazonas* and *El pasado nunca se termina*. Recent seasons include US debuts with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, San Diego Opera, and a return to NYCO Opera.

Recent engagements include Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with Opera Omaha and Pacific Symphony, Augustino in *El pasado nunca se termina* with Fort Worth Opera, *Carmina Burana* with the Acadiana Symphony, and the title role of *Macbeth* with Syracuse Opera. Next, he will return to Opera Colorado as Scarpia in *Tosca*.



Stefano de Peppo is one of opera's busiest singing actors sought for Italian character bass parts. Notable roles include the title role in *Don Pasquale*, Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, Mustafa in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Alphonso in *Così fan tutte*. Theaters in which he has appeared include the Finnish National Opera, Estates Theater in Prague, Teatro Argentina, Jerez de la Frontiera, Gran Teatro de Cordoba, and Tenerife, Teatro Colon, Teatro Bellas Artes, Teatro Aquascalientes, Monterrey, Mexico, National Theater of Costa Rica, New Israeli Opera, Royal Albert Hall (London), Opera Hamilton, Los

Angeles Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, The Atlanta Opera, Arizona Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Opera Memphis, Minnesota Opera, Opera New Jersey, Palm Beach Opera, San Diego Opera, Sarasota Opera, Opera Tampa, and Washington National Opera. He performed at Opera Colorado in 2019 for the *Barber of Seville* and the *Marriage of Figaro*. A native Italian, Mr. de Peppo began his musical career as a member of the Children's Chorus of Teatro alla Scala of Milan for seven years, after which he undertook vocal studies at Civic School of Music in Milan.



Appointed in 2015 as Opera Colorado's first-ever music director, **Ari Pelto's** "breathtaking wizardry in the pit" (*The Denver Post*) has been widely celebrated, with Pelto in demand at opera houses and concert halls throughout the United States. At the age of 24, Pelto was appointed Assistant Conductor at the Spoleto Festival and he has since gone on to conduct worldwide. International engagements include performances with Bochumer Philharmoniker and opera productions at New National Theatre of Tokyo and the Teatro Nacional Sucre in Quito, Ecuador. In 2004 he made his highly-praised debut with New York City Opera, conducting *La Traviata*, after which he became a regular, returning for productions of *Madama Butterfly*, *La bohème*, and *Carmen*. Recent successes include *Eugene Onegin* at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Virginia Opera, and *La Voix Humaine* at Chicago Opera Theater.



In recent seasons, **Louisa Muller** has directed at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Opera Queensland, and Atlanta Opera. She received considerable critical acclaim for her 2017 staging of *Das Rheingold* with the New York Philharmonic, which the *New York Times* called "riveting...a remarkable evening of music theater" and named one of the Best Classical Music Performances of the year. For Wolf Trap Opera she has directed new productions of Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Tosca*, and *Roméo et Juliette*. Muller is in her eleventh season on the directing staff of the Metropolitan Opera, where she has helmed revivals of *Don Giovanni*, *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci*, and *L'elisir d'amore*. She is on the faculty of the Scuola di Belcanto in Urbania, Italy.

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ABOUT OPERA COLORADO

Opera Colorado has been a part of the fabric of Denver's cultural community since 1981. In addition to its three mainstage performances at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House each season, Opera Colorado produces ongoing programming that showcases the artform of opera to the Rocky Mountain community. Education programs bring in over 45,000 students and life-long learners throughout the state, and the Artist in Residence Program trains the next generation of opera performers. With a belief that opera plays a vital role in enriching the community, Opera Colorado aspires to build a family of opera lovers, who reflect the multi-cultural fabric of the community. For more information, visit operacolorado.org.