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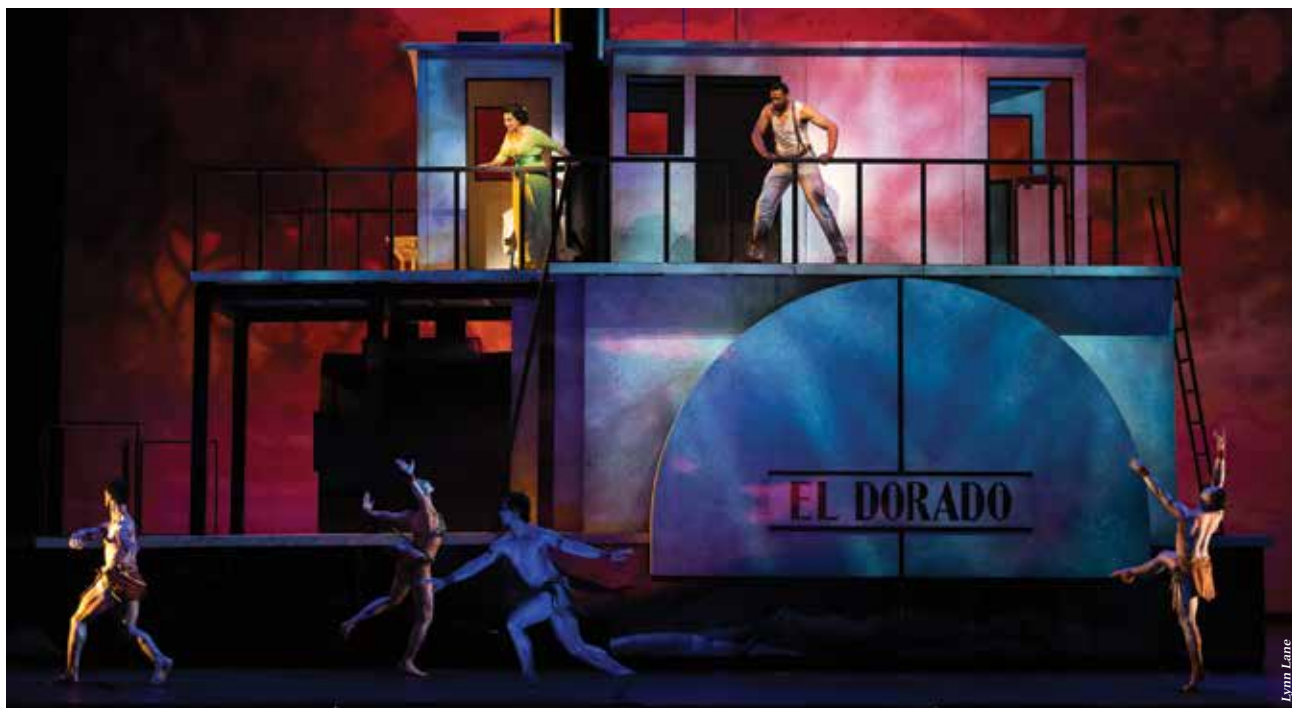
# Florencia EN EL AMAZONAS



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**Anthony Freud**  
*General Director,  
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**Enrique Mazzola**  
*Music Director*

*Lyric*

# Welcome to your Lyric



# From the Chair and the General Director

Welcome to *Florencia en el Amazonas*.

Lyric Opera of Chicago is proud to present the company premiere of this gorgeous and mystical work by Mexican composer Daniel Catán. It is the first Spanish-language work performed as part of our mainstage season.

In 2013, Lyric brought the mariachi opera *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* to both the Lyric Opera House and the surrounding community and subsequently commissioned its sequel *El Pasado Nunca Se Termina* two seasons later. For the last few years, Lyric has been assembling the ideal cast and production of *Florencia en el Amazonas* to present the stunning work that you are now about to see. It is a world of magical realism inspired by Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*. *Florencia en el Amazonas* has been mounted by more than a dozen U.S. opera companies, as well as companies in Mexico and Europe. We are so thrilled to introduce this piece to Chicago.

At its core, opera is the melding together of the greatest art forms: music, theatrical intensity, visual spectacle, thrilling dance, and powerful storytelling. As we enjoy this season's first of three contemporary opera company premieres, we celebrate the breadth and range of these stories expressed by diverse artists, from a timeless journey along the Amazon to the dark challenges of a 19th-century Nebraska homestead to a coming-of-age journey in Louisiana at the end of the 20th century. Lyric is committed to bringing new works to Chicago that give voice to a wide array of human experiences with universal resonance. This is the great power of opera; through music and drama, it shines a lens on the core of what it means to be human.

Thank you for joining us today for this magnificent adventure. We hope that it's just one of many that you have with Lyric this season, and in groundbreaking seasons to come.

Opera Forever! Lyric Forever!



*Sylvia Neil*

**SYLVIA NEIL**  
Chair



*Anthony Freud Obe*

**ANTHONY FREUD OBE**  
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*Lyric*

# Lyric welcomes The Joffrey Ballet to its new home



*Swing Low* with Stefan Goncalves and Fernando Duarte

In 2017, Lyric Opera of Chicago announced that The Joffrey Ballet would become the Lyric Opera House's resident ballet company at the start of the 2020/21 season. Season plans changed dramatically, however, and Lyric is thrilled to finally welcome Joffrey—and its passionate audiences—to Lyric for its first performances on our shared stage.

Excited to see their world-class hometown ballet company in its new venue, enthusiastic crowds attended the aptly titled *Home: a Celebration*, an October production that

ran for ten performances. Perhaps in a nod to its new home, Joffrey's inaugural program included co-founder Gerald Arpino's *Birthday Variations*, set to the music of one of Lyric's most performed composers, Giuseppe Verdi. The piece was originally commissioned in 1986 by Becky D'Angelo as a birthday gift to her husband Dino, who once owned the opera house and loved Verdi's music.

Anthony Freud, Lyric's general director, president, and CEO, sees the arrangement with Joffrey as terrific news for Chicago; it further solidifies the company's position

as a cultural hub and strengthens the Lyric Opera House's positioning as a haven for the arts. "The Lyric Opera House takes its rightful place among the great opera houses of the world, which frequently are home to magnificent ballets, as well as thrilling opera productions," says Freud. "It also marks a significant step in Lyric's quest to reach more and more people, as we identify new opportunities to grow our audience base through more regular interactions with dance patrons. The Lyric/Joffrey collaboration maximizes the use of our magnificent opera house. It is a win-win for Joffrey, for Lyric, and for our city."

After years of planning for this arrival, how does Joffrey's residence in the opera house work in practice for Lyric? While the current calendar looks slightly different, Lyric Opera of Chicago will continue to present seasons of mainstage operas and other special events in the 2021/22 season and beyond, and Joffrey will perform four ballet programs during that same timeframe. Once the general contours of both companies' seasons are decided, the next step means tackling a scheduling jigsaw puzzle, assembled by Lyric's backstage team—especially Michael Smallwood, Lyric's vice president and technical director.


"Our season calendar looks different than the calendar I've known for the nearly 15 years I've been at Lyric," says Smallwood. "We have to approach Joffrey's contract with Lyric like we're adding four shows to our regular season. We don't necessarily think about Joffrey's productions in the same way as we do our regular opera repertoire, but we have to integrate them into our planning cycle. Some of our stagehands, hair and makeup personnel, and wardrobe team members are working with Joffrey on its shows just like they would for one of our operas. We have to make sure there's room for everyone to work in the opera house."

Over the summer, Joffrey spent several days working with Lyric's technical crew during its traditional "summer tech" period. The companies worked together to make room for set pieces that could be pre-hung in the theater's overhead fly space and otherwise stashed in hidden corners around the opera house, a luxury that Joffrey did not have in its former home.

The Joffrey Ballet technical staff works hand in hand with Lyric's house crew for performances. When Joffrey personnel are in Lyric's facilities, they have access to the stage, dressing rooms, a production/artistic office, and a mobile costume/makeup shop. One of Lyric's larger coaching rooms is transformed into a physical therapy room for the dancers. With Joffrey on Lyric's stage for performances, Lyric continues to work daily in its scenery

and handling areas to prepare for upcoming operas. Most Joffrey rehearsals continue to take place in Joffrey Tower on Randolph Street, while dancers and staff are backstage at Lyric for final rehearsals and performances. When Joffrey's trucks arrive at the opera house, the first items that are unloaded are miles of ballet barres to fill up the rehearsal rooms. To help accommodate onsite Joffrey rehearsals, a special sprung dance floor with a marley vinyl surface was installed in one of the rehearsal rooms as well as onstage; this involved a true collaboration: using Lyric's flooring combined with Joffrey's to create a surface ideal for dancing. Lyric's already extensive wardrobe and costume department was further expanded to accommodate more onsite laundry facilities that serve Joffrey's own costume department and the company's needs during its residency.

Next up for Joffrey: English choreographer Christopher Wheeldon's production of *The Nutcracker*, the most popular title in the ballet repertory, which will run for 28 performances in December. *The Nutcracker* will require five trucks of equipment, a big increase from the one-and-a-half trucks needed for *Home: a Celebration*. Smallwood says the Lyric crew is ready for the challenge. "We know there is a learning curve for everyone during the first season, and we'll continue to work together to improve our processes. Everyone is eager to make it work and figure out solutions."

Every aspect of the performing arts has undergone such transformative change in the last 20 months, and both Lyric and Joffrey are ready to fill the Lyric Opera House with fresh artistry. As Smallwood puts it, "It can't hurt to have more art in our building, especially now." 



*Under the Trees' Voices* with Dylan Gutierrez and Jeraldine Mendoza



# The evolution of an art form: A look back at Lyric's virtual 2020/21 season

On March 13, 2020, Lyric Opera of Chicago faced the unthinkable when the company was forced to cancel its highly anticipated *Ring* cycle. With a full cast and company rehearsing onstage—and hundreds of international cultural tourists planning trips to Chicago for the nearly sold-out run—it was a heartbreaking moment. Soon after, the extended reality of COVID-19 hit, forcing the cancellation of further performances, and ultimately the entire 2020/21 season.

Lyric's leadership was faced with a difficult decision: to shutter the company indefinitely and go dark for the entire season, or to reimagine the ways in which Lyric could continue to ensure that music and opera reached its loyal and passionate audiences.

"The decision for us was an obvious one," says Lyric general director, president & CEO Anthony Freud. "We knew that more than ever—with traumatic news unfolding on a daily basis and the very personal ways in which people were experiencing the pandemic—people needed a lifeline to bring them solace, peace, and joy. We felt that we needed to find new ways to reach our audiences and keep producing great art."

By July 2020, with flexible and responsive programming moves and the cooperation of its union partners, the company was ready to broadcast its first virtual concert: "Lawrence Brownlee and Friends, the Next Chapter: Celebrating the Depth and Breadth of Black Artistry." The presentation was a sequel to a successful in-person event that had been held at Lyric Opera House the previous season. Working closely with celebrated tenor Lawrence Brownlee, a Lyric favorite, the company curated a program of music performed by Black artists; since its premiere, it has received more than 20,000 views.

Assembling the first digital offering provided a blueprint for future endeavors. Lyric staff and artists learned to navigate a world of programming choices and digital music rights; find sets, lighting, and costumes that looked good on screen; and understand all of the other choices that come with filming and broadcasting a

digital performance, such as release timing and platform selection, closed captioning, and digital program books, among other challenges.

"It was important to us that we make our digital content free," Freud explains. "The entire idea was to allow as many people as possible to access our programs, free of any barriers. We garnered more than 300,000 views of our content during the reimagined digital season, which exceeds a season's worth of tickets at the Lyric Opera House. Our hope is that people who encountered opera or Lyric for the first time will continue to explore with us—whether digitally or in person—now that our live performances have resumed."

Last fall, Lyric's annual gala moved entirely online with "For the Love of Lyric," a concert filmed on the stage of the opera house and in locations around the world, featuring opera stars Renée Fleming, J'Nai Bridges, Ailyn Pérez, and Soloman Howard, and Broadway star Heather Headley. Loyal Lyric supporters enjoyed the concert virtually, while Zoom provided an opportunity for donors to connect with the singers and each other before the performance. Beyond its fundraising component, the concert was made available to the public, garnering nearly 20,000 views.

One of the benefits of Lyric's digital programming has been an opportunity to highlight the company's formidable artistic forces. Many of the performances featured members of Lyric's Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center, providing these emerging artists with invaluable opportunities to showcase their talents and hone their skills for the digital demands of opera's evolving art form. Programs like December 2020's "Pasión Latina" offered the opportunity for current and past Ryan Opera Center members to work alongside star and host Ana María Martínez in an intimate setting that showcased music of the Spanish-speaking world.

Lyric music director Enrique Mazzola—then in his second season as music director designate—also conceived a number of exciting programs that showcased the

Ana María Martínez performs in "Pasión Latina."

Kyle Fluhacker

esteemed Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus. The Orchestra took center stage in a serialized program of Rossini string sonatas, “The Sonata Sessions,” while the Chorus starred in “The Great Verdi Chorus Showdown,” a popular digital series featuring some of Verdi’s greatest choruses (spoiler alert—audiences voted “Va, pensiero” from *Nabucco* as winner). Maestro Mazzola even took to the piano himself in the Ryan Opera Center showcase “Sole e Amore,” which featured lesser-known musical gems by well known Italian opera composers.

Lyric’s 2020/21 season was to include *Attila*, a continuation of the company’s series of early operas by Giuseppe Verdi. Rather than abandon the title altogether, Lyric presented a digital recital of excerpts from the opera, conducted by Maestro Mazzola and featuring four extraordinary American singers: Tamara Wilson and three alumni of the Ryan Opera Center—Matthew Polenzani, Christian Van Horn, and Quinn Kelsey—accompanied by pianists William C. Billingham and Jerad Mosbey. Mazzola also wrote, produced, shot, and edited an original online series, “Breaking Down the Score” in which he walked audiences through an entertaining and enlightening look at 12 main chapters of *Attila*, all from the unique perspective of the conductor.

With every program that came together, Lyric’s production team had to spring into action to put together a unique look for the stage, from “Sir Andrew Davis: From Mozart to Stravinsky,” which celebrated the final year of Lyric’s beloved and long-tenured music director with selections from *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Rake’s Progress*, to “The New Classics,” a Broadway song extravaganza that brought audiences backstage into an intimate virtual cabaret space. Lyric’s talented production team made every backdrop and set shine for the cameras.

To produce its all-digital season, the company learned how best to negotiate the many ins and outs of ensuring safety during the constantly evolving global pandemic, and a strict set of health and safety protocols was established to protect Lyric’s artists, technicians, and company members. COVID-19 testing became a regular part of being a performer or behind-the-scenes team member.


By the spring of 2021, with vaccines rolling out across the country, Lyric was ready to bring audiences together—or at least invite them to park near one another. Lyric’s immersive opera production of “Twilight: Gods” was a sold-out new take on Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung* that was performed in the Millennium Park Lakeside garage. A co-production with Michigan Opera Theatre, this unique drive-through experience was conceived by director Yuval Sharon, who wrote the new English texts, and featured poetic transitions written and performed by Chicago interdisciplinary artist avery r. young. The starry cast included many Lyric

favorites, including Christine Goerke as Brünnhilde. A film of the experiential production was then released to a wider audience throughout the summer and fall.

Lyric also partnered with the Chicago Park District for an enchanting outdoor production of Humperdinck’s classic *Hansel and Gretel*, which performed to a sold-out audience at North Park Village Nature Center early in the summer of 2021. The production will be made available to Lyric Unlimited school audiences in 2022.

As plans for a return to live grand opera were being finalized, the company marshaled its considerable musical forces for a capstone to its all-digital season: an innovative production of Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci*, filmed live in the Lyric Opera House. Music director Enrique Mazzola conducted a powerhouse cast including Russell Thomas, Ailyn Pérez, Lucas Meachem, Quinn Kelsey, and Eric Ferring, alongside members of the Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus. The *Pagliacci* film, like most of Lyric’s filmed programs from the season, remains available for viewing by a global audience.

While Lyric’s return to live performances in the opera house has been incredibly successful, its commitment to producing and distributing unique digital content is unwavering. Stay tuned to learn more about how Lyric will continue to include pioneering digital programming in its vision for artistic excellence, audience building, and community outreach.

Demand your own look back at Lyric’s digital programming you may have missed—visit [lyricopera.org/ondemand](https://lyricopera.org/ondemand). 



Ailyn Pérez and Russell Thomas in Lyric’s *Pagliacci* film.



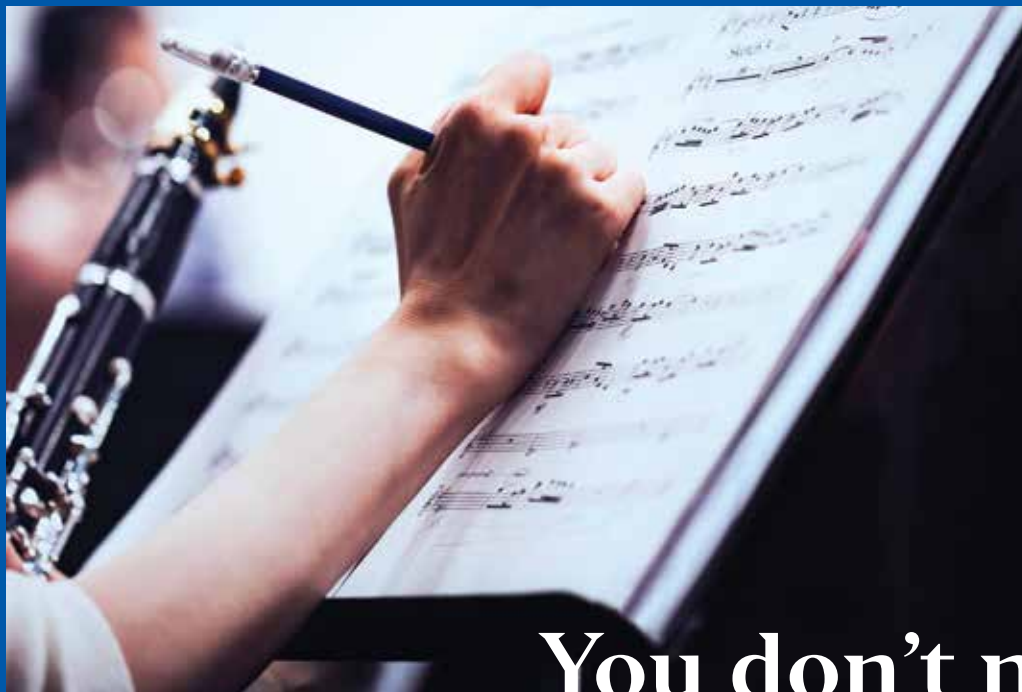
*The entrancing allure of magical realism, in which realistic narrative combines with fantastical elements, illuminates this story of a glamorous diva on a life-changing Amazonian adventure. Florencia Grimaldi, a renowned diva, is engaged to perform at the opera house of Manaus, Brazil. Traveling there by riverboat, she pines for her long-lost lover who she hopes will be awaiting her in Manaus. Florencia and her fellow passengers, who possess their own tumultuous romantic histories, are enlivened by the magnificent, lushly romantic music created by Mexico's greatest operatic composer: Daniel Catán.*



*Florencia en el Amazonas*  
(Houston Grand Opera)

*Lyric*

# Florencia en el Amazonas



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# Florencia en el Amazonas (Florencia in the Amazon)

## Lyric Premiere

Music by **Daniel Catán** | Opera in two acts in Spanish

Libretto by Marcela Fuentes-Berain, inspired by the writings of Gabriel García Márquez

### CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Riolobo  
Rosalba  
Paula  
Alvaro  
Captain  
Florencia  
Arcadio  
Dancers

**Ethan Vincent<sup>+</sup>**  
**Gabriella Reyes<sup>+</sup>**  
**Deborah Nansteel**  
**Levi Hernandez<sup>••</sup>**  
**Raymond Aceto**  
**Ana María Martínez**  
**Mario Rojas<sup>••</sup>**  
**Dwayne Brown<sup>+</sup>**  
**Joshua Leon Eguia<sup>+</sup>**  
**Joseph Hernandez**  
**Michael Francis McBride<sup>+</sup>**  
**Akua Noni Parker<sup>+</sup>**  
**Benjamin Holliday Wardell**  
**Hannah Zin<sup>+</sup>**

Conductor  
Director  
Set Designer  
Costume Designer  
Lighting Designer  
Projection Designer  
Chorus Master  
Choreographer  
Ballet Mistress  
Wigmaster and  
Makeup Designer  
Assistant Director  
Stage Manager  
Musical Preparation

**Jordan de Souza<sup>+</sup>**  
**Francesca Zambello**  
**Peter J. Davison**  
**Catherine Zuber**  
**Mark McCullough**  
**S. Katy Tucker<sup>+</sup>**  
**Michael Black**  
**Eric Sean Fogel**  
**August Tye**  
**Sarah Hatten**

**Katrina Bachus**  
**Hester Warren-Steijn**  
**William C. Billingham**  
**Noah Lindquist**  
**Matthew Piatt**  
**Eric Weimer**  
**Yasuko Oura**  
**Susan Miller Hult**  
**Patricia Houk, adapted  
by Jeremy Johnson**

Actors: **Emerson Elias, Richard Manera**

Supernumeraries: **Elena Avila<sup>+</sup>, Kym Crawford,  
James Fazzini, David McClintock, Allen Payne,  
Sasha Rashidee, Claudia Urbano**

Ballet Accompanist  
Prompter  
Projected English Titles

First performed by Houston Grand Opera on October 25, 1996.

First performed by Lyric Opera of Chicago on November 13, 2021.

<sup>+</sup> Lyric debut

<sup>••</sup>Alumnus, The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center



Florencia en el Amazonas (Houston Grand Opera)

Lydia Lane

# Synopsis

TIME | **Early 1900s**

PLACE | **The *El Dorado*, a steamboat sailing down the Amazon from Leticia, Colombia, to Manaus, Brazil**

## Act one

On the riverbank, Riolobo, a mystical character who can assume many forms, excitedly announces that the *El Dorado* is bound for the opera house in Manaus. There, the legendary opera diva Florencia Grimaldi, who has not set foot in her native South America for 20 years, will give a concert to reopen the theater. From among the crowds lining the riverbank and selling their local wares, the ship's passengers come aboard: a young journalist, Rosalba, who is working on a biography about Florencia Grimaldi; Paula and Alvaro, a middle-aged couple journeying to hear Grimaldi in hopes of rekindling their marriage; and the diva herself, traveling incognito. As the Captain steers the ship out of the busy port, Florencia reflects on the emptiness of her life and her desire to rediscover herself and find her long-lost lover, Cristobal, a butterfly hunter in search of the rare Emerald Muse. Rosalba accidentally drops her notebook into the river; she is distraught because it contains all her notes for the biography, but it is rescued by the Captain's nephew, Arcadio. The two exchange confidences about their longings and desires. Alvaro and Paula attempt to dine on deck, but misunderstandings about the exotic menu lead to bitter exchanges. Florencia, awakened by the sounds of the jungle, learns from the Captain that the butterfly hunter disappeared into the jungle without a trace. Later, a tempestuous game of cards contrasts the growing affection between Rosalba and Arcadio and the escalating tension between Paula and Alvaro. A violent storm quickly develops and the ship is carried helplessly in rushing currents and a downpour of pink rain. Alvaro saves the boat from being crushed by tree trunks but is knocked overboard. With the Captain unconscious, Riolobo appears in the guise of a river spirit and implores the mercy of the river gods. Arcadio ably takes the helm but is unable to stop the forces of nature as the ship runs aground.

## INTERMISSION

## Act two

In the quiet after the storm, Florencia wonders whether she is dead or alive. Arcadio and Rosalba rejoice to find they have survived the storm, but frightened by the intensity of their feelings for each other, they vow not to fall in love and risk disillusionment. Paula laments the loss of Alvaro, recognizing that the wall between them was pride, not a lack of love. Riolobo once again calls upon the mystical and transformative powers of the Amazon. Suddenly, Alvaro is returned to the boat, explaining that Paula's voice called him back from the brink of death. On behalf of all the

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**Original production by Houston Grand Opera. Scenery provided by Bay Productions, Cardiff, Wales, U.K.; Adirondack Scenic Studios; McGuire Scenic; and Lyric Opera of Chicago scene shop. Additional costumes provided by Steppenwolf Theatre Company costume shop and Lyric Opera of Chicago wardrobe department.**

## APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

<b>Act 1</b>	55 minutes
<b>Intermission</b>	25 minutes
<b>Act 2</b>	45 minutes
<b>Total</b>	2 hours, 5 minutes

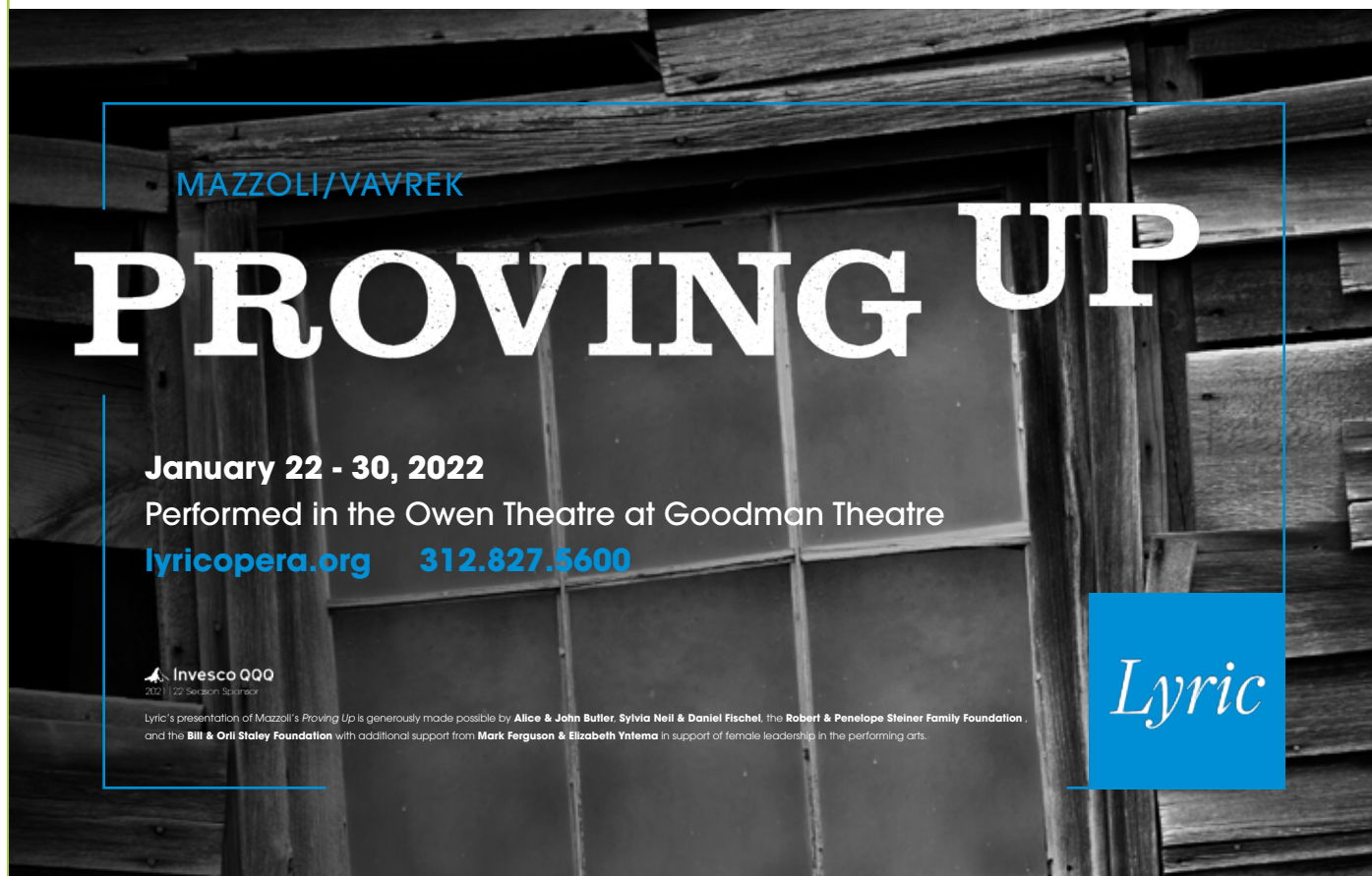
*Lyric*



# Synopsis

## Continued


passengers, Florencia thanks him for saving their lives and they resume their journey to Manaus. Rosalba discovers that her precious notebook has been ruined in the storm. She is distraught by the loss of two years' work, but Florencia tells her she has lost nothing irreplaceable. The two women begin to argue about the source of Grimaldi's talents, and when Florencia passionately declares that the diva's gift sprang from her love for a man, Rosalba suddenly realizes the woman standing before her is the singer herself. Both pairs of lovers are reconciled to their need for each other by the time the ship nears Manaus, but no one is allowed to disembark because of a cholera outbreak. In despair at being unable to fulfill her search, Florencia allows her spirit to drift toward Cristobal's in a mystical reunion.



MAZZOLI/VAVREK

# PROVING UP

**January 22 - 30, 2022**  
Performed in the Owen Theatre at Goodman Theatre  
[lyricopera.org](http://lyricopera.org) 312.827.5600

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2021 | 22 Season Sponsor

Lyric's presentation of Mazzoli's *Proving Up* is generously made possible by **Alice & John Butler**, **Sylvia Neil & Daniel Fischel**, the **Robert & Penelope Steiner Family Foundation**, and the **Bill & Orli Staley Foundation** with additional support from **Mark Ferguson & Elizabeth Yntema** in support of female leadership in the performing arts.

*Lyric*



# Artist profiles



## DANIEL CATÁN | COMPOSER

The Mexican composer (1949–2011) is particularly renowned for his operas and Spanish-language contributions to the international repertoire. His opera *Rappaccini's Daughter* was the first Mexican opera to be produced by a professional company in the United States. Catán's subsequent opera *Florencia en el Amazonas* became the first Spanish-language opera to be commissioned by an opera company in the United States (co-commissioned by Houston Grand Opera, LA Opera, and Seattle Opera, it premiered in Houston in 1996). Shortly thereafter, Catán received a Guggenheim Fellowship for his contributions to music. In 2004, Catán's *Salsipuedes: a Tale of Love, War and Anchovies* was premiered by Houston Grand Opera. LA Opera premiered his *Il Postino* in 2010. Catán passed away while working on his next opera, *Meet John Doe*. His works also include vocal, chamber, orchestral, and choral music, as well as music for ballet, film, and television.



## MARCELA FUENTES-BERAIN | LIBRETTIST

The distinguished Mexican writer has worked in film, opera, television, radio, and theater. Among her projects are the script for *Hasta Morir*, which received two nominations from the Mexican Academy of Film Arts and Sciences, and *Sumas y Restas*, co-written with Colombian director Victor Gaviria; it won Best Movie at the Cartagena Film Festival and Best Foreign Film from the Mexican Academy of Film Arts and Sciences. Fuentes-Berain worked closely with the late Hollywood director Tony Scott on *Man on Fire* starring Denzel Washington. She has been a script consultant for the Sundance Institute for more than 15 years. Fuentes-Berain was chosen to create the academic program for the first Mexican screenwriting school which opened in 2015. She has been a member of the selection committee of the Huelva Ibero-American Film Festival since 2001.



## ANA MARÍA MARTÍNEZ | FLORENCIA

**Previously at Lyric:** Ten roles since 2008/09, most recently Cio-Cio-San/*Madama Butterfly* (2019/20), Marguerite/*Faust* (2017/18).

The internationally renowned, Grammy Award-winning Puerto-Rican-born soprano recently starred as Florencia at Houston and Florida grand operas. Martínez's exceptionally varied repertoire extends stylistically from Pamina/*The Magic Flute* (San Francisco, Vienna, Bonn, Stuttgart) to Carmen (Houston, Los Angeles, Santa Fe), Rusalka (Lyric, Glyndebourne, Houston, Buenos Aires), Cio-Cio-San (Paris, Met, Vienna, London, Houston, Washington,

Munich, Los Angeles, Santa Fe), Blanche/*Dialogues des Carmélites* (Hamburg), and Mélisande (Florence). Recent new roles include Tosca (Philadelphia), Paolina/Donizetti's *Poliuto* (Glyndebourne, released on DVD), Elisabetta/*Don Carlo* (Los Angeles, San Francisco), and Alice Ford/*Falstaff* (London's Royal Opera). Last season, Martínez reprised her celebrated portrayal of Mimi/*La bohème* in her debut with San Diego Opera. She received great acclaim for the 2019 world premiere of Jimmy López's oratorio *Dreamers* (Philharmonia Orchestra, Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting). The soprano is Houston Grand Opera's first-ever artistic advisor, and is in her second year as Rice University's Shepherd School of Music artist-in-residence.



## GABRIELLA REYES | ROSALBA Lyric debut

Chosen by WQXR New York as a 20 for 20 Artist to Watch and named a 2019 Lincoln Center Emerging Artist, the Nicaraguan-American soprano is rapidly ascending to prominence. An alumna of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, Reyes has appeared at the Met as the High Priestess/*Aida*, Liù/*Turandot*, First Lady/*The Magic Flute*, and Nella/*Gianni Schicchi*. Operatic highlights to date also include Musetta/*La bohème* (Santa Fe Opera debut) and Cio-Cio-San/*Seven Deaths of Maria Callas* (Bavarian State Opera). Reyes also has sung the First Lady in excerpts from Mozart's opera with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, led by Gustavo Dudamel at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. She has appeared as soloist with the New York Choral Society and the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. The soprano was awarded a coveted Sara Tucker Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation in 2018.



## MARIO ROJAS | ARCADIO

**Previously at Lyric:** Eight roles since 2017/18, most recently Major Domo/*The Queen of Spades*; Percy, Leicester/*The Three Queens* (both 2019/20).

The Mexican tenor is an alumnus of Lyric's Ryan Opera Center and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He has sung Rodolfo/*La bohème* at Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes, and in 2019 performed a concert for 30,000 people in his home town of Torreón. Among the honors Rojas has received are a 2018 Sullivan Foundation Award, third place in the 2018 Dallas Opera National Vocal Competition, 2018 winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Illinois District Auditions, second place in the East Bay Opera League Competition, the Marta Eggerth Kiepura Award in the Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation International Vocal Competition, third place in the Palm Springs Opera Guild Competition, the Emerging Singers

Award in the Opera Index Vocal Competition, and most recently a 2020 Luminarts Foundation Fellowship Award. Rojas has been heard in the Harris Theater's "Beyond the Aria" series and Kentucky Opera's Sidecar cabaret series.



### DEBORAH NANSTEEL | PAULA

**Previously at Lyric:** Three roles since 2015/16, most recently Suzuki/*Madama Butterfly* (2019/20), Siegrune/*Die Walküre* (2017/18).

The American mezzo-soprano's recent successes have included Emilia/*Otello* and Marthe/*Faust* (both at Washington National Opera), Alisa/*Lucia di Lammermoor* (Metropolitan Opera debut), and roles in several contemporary works: Mother/*The Consul* (Opera Saratoga), Mother/*Blind Injustice* (world premiere, Cincinnati Opera), Brigitta/*Die tote Stadt* in concert (Bard Music Festival), Lucinda/*Cold Mountain* (North Carolina Opera, after creating the role at Santa Fe Opera), Sister Helen/*Dead Man Walking* (Opera on the Avalon), and Granma/*The Grapes of Wrath* and Grace/Daniel Sonenberg's *The Summer King* (both at Michigan Opera Theatre). Nansteel also has portrayed Nettie/*Carousel* and Elvira/*An American Tragedy* at the Glimmerglass Festival. She debuted with the New York Philharmonic in 2015 alongside Eric Owens in *In Their Footsteps: Great African American Singers and Their Legacy*. The mezzo-soprano is an alumna of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and the young artist programs of Washington National Opera, San Francisco Opera, and Seattle Opera.



### LEVI HERNANDEZ | ALVARO

**Previously at Lyric:** 10 roles since 2003/04, most recently Schaunard/*La bohème* (2007/08); Waiter, Footman/*Der Rosenkavalier* (2005/06).

The American baritone, a Ryan Opera Center alumnus, has rapidly gained momentum as a sought-after artist. Among his most important successes in leading roles have been Sharpless/*Madama Butterfly* (opposite Ana María Martínez at Houston Grand Opera), Papageno/*The Magic Flute* and the Music Master/*Ariadne auf Naxos* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and Guglielmo/*Così fan tutte* with Spoleto Festival USA. He has appeared with many major American companies, including those of Boston, Philadelphia, and Omaha, among many others. He also has been heard internationally at the Teatro Nacional Sucre in Quito, Ecuador as well as Komische Oper Berlin. Recent important credits include Rambaldo/*La rondine* (Minnesota Opera); Rabbi Lampert/*Enemies, A Love Story* (Kentucky Opera); Sharpless/*Madama Butterfly* (Virginia Opera); Pa Joad/*The Grapes of Wrath* (Michigan Opera Theatre); Aba/*El milagro del recuerdo* (Houston Grand Opera); Dvořák's *Te Deum* (Shippensburg Music Festival); and Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* (Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra).



### ETHAN VINCENT | RIOLOBO

#### Lyric debut

An alumnus of Northwestern University and Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts, the baritone sang the Captain/*Eugene Onegin* this summer as a Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Artist. He also recently portrayed Marcello/*La bohème* at the National Performing Arts Center, Taiwan. Highlights of previous seasons also include Juano/*West Side Story* with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting; Joseph De Rocher/*Dead Man Walking* (Northwestern University, Chicago premiere); Belcore/*L'elisir d'amore* at Indianapolis Opera; and Behike/*Hatuey: A Memory of Fire* (North American premiere) in collaboration with the Peak Performance series. As a Resident Artist at AVA, Vincent portrayed Rigoletto, Don Giovanni, title role/*The Demon* by Anton Rubinstein, Gianni Schicchi, Count di Luna/*Il trovatore*, Albert/*Werther*, and Guglielmo/*Così fan tutte*. The baritone was a national semifinalist in the 2018 Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition. Vincent appears as César in the acclaimed film *Bel Canto* alongside Julianne Moore and Ken Watanabe.



### RAYMOND ACETO | CAPTAIN

**Previously at Lyric:** 13 roles since 1997/98, most recently Ramfis/*Aida*, Varlaam/*Boris Godunov* (both 2011/12).

The American bass is well established as an important presence among the world's leading opera companies and symphony orchestras. Recent successes include his return to the Metropolitan Opera as the Bonze/*Madama Butterfly*, Surin/*The Queen of Spades*, Zuniga/*Carmen*, and Nourabad/*The Pearl Fishers*; Rocco/*Fidelio* at L'Opéra de Montréal, celebrating Beethoven's 250th birthday; and return engagements with New Orleans Opera (Archbishop/Tchaikovsky's *The Maid of Orléans*) and Florida Grand Opera (a reprise of one of the bass's signature roles, Sparafucile/*Rigoletto*). Aceto is a favorite at Washington National Opera (Méphistophélès/*Faust*, Hunding and Fafner/*Ring* cycle), and has reprised the latter roles at San Francisco Opera and Lyric Opera. Among his many prestigious appearances abroad have been leading roles at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and the major companies of Madrid, Palermo, Amsterdam, Brussels, Berlin, and Frankfurt.



### DWAYNE BROWN | DANCER

#### Lyric debut

Dancer and performer Dwayne Brown is currently based in Harlem, New York. In addition to numerous appearances in film, television, and various stage productions, he has worked as a dancer with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company, Ralph Lemon, Sean Curran, Reggie Wilson/Fist and Heel Performance Group, and most recently Kevin Beasley.


**JOSHUA LEON EGUIA | DANCER**
**Lyric debut**

Joshua Leon Eguia is a dancer and choreographer based in New York City.

He has had the pleasure of dancing for choreographers including Karole Armitage, Serge Bennathan, John Beasant III, Bill T. Jones, and Vladimir Varnava. Eguia also has been featured in commercial work for Marc Jacobs, Moroccanoil, and Imitation of Christ fashion. His work has been presented at venues including SUNY Fredonia, the Austin Dance Festival, the Boston Contemporary Dance Festival, and the Tank NYC.


**JOSEPH HERNANDEZ | DANCER**

**Previously at Lyric:** *West Side Story*, *Cendrillon* (both 2018/19).

The Chicagoan began his movement training by practicing Shotokan karate. He received

his formal training from Western Michigan University, where he graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree in dance. Hernandez's professional credits include performances with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, LED Boise, ODC/ Dance, Kate Weare Company, and River North Dance Chicago, among others. Most recently, he appeared in Broadway's production of *West Side Story*, with international tours pending. Hernandez also is a passionate educator and choreographer and presently serves as an artistic associate for COMMON Conservatory in Chicago.


**MICHAEL FRANCIS MCBRIDE | DANCER**
**Lyric debut**

Originally from Johnson City, New York, McBride was asked by Judith Jamison to join

the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 2009 while he was completing his bachelor's degree at Fordham University. In his tenure performing with the Ailey Company from 2009–2019, he performed in over 65 ballets worldwide and collaborated with choreographers such as Alvin Ailey, Garth Fagan, George Faison, Geoffrey Holder, Bill T. Jones, Jiří Kylián, Wayne McGregor, Ohad Naharin, David Parsons, Paul Taylor, and Twyla Tharp. McBride has appeared in John Caird's *Estrella Scrooge: A Christmas Carol with a Twist*, *Pose* on FX, and *Burning Man: the Musical* on Amazon Prime. He also has performed several times for the Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS organization and most recently appeared in Santa Fe Opera's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.


**AKUA NONI PARKER | DANCER**
**Lyric debut**

Parker has over 20 years of experience in the performing arts industry. She has performed as a principal dancer with Dance Theatre of Harlem, Cincinnati Ballet, Ballet San Jose, and the Alvin Ailey

American Dance Theater. She also holds certification in the American Ballet Theatre National Teaching Curriculum (levels pre-primary through level five), the Zena Rommett Floor-Barre technique, and is a certified vegan chef. Parker also uses her artistic experience, knowledge of wellness, and love of all things “do-it-yourself” to guide others as a health and lifestyle coach.


**BENJAMIN HOLLIDAY WARDELL | DANCER**

**Previously at Lyric:** *La traviata* (2018/19).

Benjamin Holliday Wardell is founder and creative director of The Cambrians. In his

14 years as a professional dancer, he has had the privilege to work with many of the world's leading choreographers and movement researchers. Career highlights include work as a soloist with the Cincinnati Ballet and as a member of Alonzo King's LINES ballet in San Francisco. Wardell performed as a part of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago for over four years and continues to call Chicago home. He has toured internationally with Aszure Barton and created work with Ron de Jesus Dance and Lucky Plush Productions. Wardell also has performed with Lar Lubovitch and recently created a new performance with Alejandro Cerrudo.


**HANNAH ZIN | DANCER**
**Lyric debut**

The New York-based dancer received her early training at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre as well as many summer programs across

the country. She graduated summa cum laude from Fordham University and the Ailey School with a bachelor's degree in art history and dance. Over the past four seasons, Zin has performed in numerous operas, including appearances with the Metropolitan Opera in productions of *Guillaume Tell*, *Rusalka*, *Parsifal*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Macbeth*; Opera Saratoga in *Zémire et Azor*; and Washington National Opera in *La traviata* and *Samson and Delilah*, for which she also served as dance captain.


**JORDAN DE SOUZA | CONDUCTOR**
**Lyric debut**

The Canadian conductor served as First Kapellmeister of the Komische Oper

Berlin from 2017–2020. During this term, he collaborated with renowned director Barrie Kosky on four critically acclaimed new productions: *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *La bohème*, Weinberger's *Frühlingsstürme*, and *Candide*. Following his debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in the 2020 Glyndebourne Cup Competition, de Souza was immediately invited to conduct a new production of *La bohème* at the 2022 Glyndebourne Festival. His 2021/22 season engagements include a debut conducting *Don Giovanni* at Opernhaus Zürich; *Der fliegende Holländer*/ National Theatre Mannheim; and concerts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, which will include the world premiere of Simon Bertrand's

*Weltengeist*. Further ahead he will appear in productions at Theater an der Wien, Oper Köln, and Deutsche Oper Berlin. Recent highlights include *The Magic Flute*/debut at the Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 6*/Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, *Der Rosenkavalier*/Garsington Opera, *Rigoletto*/Houston Grand Opera, *La bohème*/Staatsoper Hannover, and a return to lead the Orchestre Métropolitain in Montreal.



### FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO | DIRECTOR

**Previously at Lyric:** Six productions since 1999/00, most recently *Luisa Miller* (2019/20), *West Side Story* (2018/19).

The American director is internationally recognized in both opera and theater. She has been general director of the Glimmerglass Festival since 2010 and artistic director of Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center since 2012. As a result of her vision and leadership, both organizations have thrived artistically and financially while increasing their national and international profiles. She served as artistic advisor to San Francisco Opera from 2005–2011 and artistic director of Skylight Theater from 1987–1992. Zambello's U.S. directing debut took place at Houston Grand Opera, and she debuted in Europe at Venice's Teatro La Fenice. She has since staged new productions at major theaters and opera houses in Europe, Asia, Australia, Russia, and the United States. Zambello has worked at more than 50 opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Opéra national de Paris, the Bolshoi, Bavarian State Opera, the Royal Opera, and Opera Australia.



### PETER J. DAVISON | SET DESIGNER

**Previously at Lyric:** Three productions since 2008/09, most recently *West Side Story* (2018/19), *Porgy and Bess* (2014/15).

The British designer's productions throughout Europe and the U.K. include *The Marriage of Figaro* (Vienna); *Die Gezeichneten*, *Falstaff*, and *Die schweigsame Frau* (Zurich); *Capriccio* (Berlin, Turin); *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Carmen*, and *Mary Stuart* (English National Opera); *Anna Bolena* (Bavarian State Opera); *Mitridate*, *Re di Ponto* and *Carmen* (Salzburg); *The Queen of Spades* (Covent Garden); *Guillaume Tell* (Opéra national de Paris); and *Cyrano de Bergerac* (La Scala), among many other productions and venues. In addition to *The Rake's Progress*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac* at the Metropolitan Opera, his work also has been seen in America at Washington National Opera (eight productions); San Francisco, Houston Grand, and Dallas operas; and the Glimmerglass Festival. His theater credits include productions for Broadway (*Medea*, *Hamlet*, *Deuce*, *Copenhagen*, *Democracy*, *Is He Dead*, *Blithe Spirit*), the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National and West End theatres, and the Chichester Festival Theatre. Among his many acclaimed musical theater productions are *Jesus Christ Superstar* (U.K./U.S.A. tour, Broadway) and *Show Boat* (Royal Albert Hall). Davison is a former Tony, Drama Desk, and Olivier Award nominee.



### CATHERINE ZUBER | COSTUME DESIGNER

**Previously at Lyric:** Three productions since 2013/14, most recently *The Barber of Seville* (2019/20, 2013/14), *Romeo and Juliet* (2015/16).

The British-born designer's acclaimed work in opera includes Metropolitan Opera productions of *The Barber of Seville*, *Doctor Atomic*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Le Comte Ory*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Two Boys*, *Otello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Porgy and Bess*, as well as *La forza del destino* (Washington), *Carmen* (London), *Romeo and Juliet* (Salzburg), *Faust* (Baden-Baden), and the *Ring* cycle (Washington, San Francisco). She has been equally successful on Broadway in musicals (*Frozen*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, *War Paint*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Gigi*, *The King and I*, *The Bridges of Madison County*, *The Sound of Music*, *My Fair Lady*, *Moulin Rouge*), comedy (*Born Yesterday*, *The Royal Family*, *Dinner at Eight*, *Twelfth Night*), and drama (*The Father*, *Oslo*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Oleanna*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *Mauritius*, *Doubt*, *Little Women*, *Dracula*, *Ivanov*). She also designed the live NBC/Universal broadcast of *The Sound of Music*. Zuber has won eight Tony Awards and has received the Olivier, Lucille Lortel, Henry Hewes, Ovation, Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk, and Obie awards. Zuber is a 2017 recipient of the Irene Sharaff Lifetime Achievement Award and was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2016. *Catherine Zuber is supported by the Richard P. and Susan Kiphart Costume Designer Endowed Chair.*



### MARK MCCULLOUGH | LIGHTING DESIGNER

**Previously at Lyric:** Four productions since 2011/12, most recently *Luisa Miller* (2019/20), *West Side Story* (2018/19).

The renowned lighting designer's work has been seen at the Metropolitan Opera (*The Marriage of Figaro*), the Vienna State Opera (*Macbeth*), the Bolshoi Theatre (*La traviata*), Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts (*The Tales of Hoffmann*), La Scala (*Cyrano de Bergerac*), Madrid's Teatro Real (*Luisa Miller*), the Royal Opera House Covent Garden (*The Queen of Spades*), and the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia (*Nabucco*). He also has been part of productions at the major companies of Washington (*Ring* cycle, *Porgy and Bess*); Strasbourg (*The Beggar's Opera*); Boston, Miami, Seattle, Dallas, San Diego, and St. Louis; as well as Bard College's Fisher Center and Glimmerglass Festival. Among McCullough's theater credits are *Der Besuch der alten Dame* (Vienna's Ronacher Theater); *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Broadway, U.K. tour); *Whistle Down the Wind* (Aldwych Theatre, London); *The White Devil* and *Don Carlos* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Rebecca* (St. Gallen, Stuttgart's Palladium Theater); and Off-Broadway productions including *Old Money*, *How I Learned to Drive*, and *The Long Christmas Ride Home*. McCullough's regional theater work has been seen at the La Jolla Playhouse, Mark Taper Forum, Hartford Stage, Steppenwolf, and Center Stage, among others. *Mark McCullough is supported by the Mary-Louise and James S. Aagard Lighting Director Endowed Chair.*





### S. KATY TUCKER | PROJECTION DESIGNER

#### Lyric debut

S. Katy Tucker is a New York-based video and projection designer. She began her career as a painter and video installation artist and exhibited her work at a variety of galleries such as the Corcoran Museum, Dupont Underground, Dillon Gallery, and Artist's Space in New York City. She has collaborated with musicians including Paul McCartney, Paola Prestini, Helga Davis, Amanda Gookin, and Jeffrey Ziegler. Her work in live performance has been seen around the world, including on Broadway, Off-Broadway, the Metropolitan Opera, Sydney Opera House, Dutch National Opera, Carnegie Hall, New York City Ballet, the Kennedy Center, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Recent productions include *Samson and Delilah* and *Don Giovanni*/Kennedy Center, *Hansel and Gretel*/Canadian Opera Company, and Verdi's *Requiem*/Metropolitan Opera. Upcoming engagements include the world premiere of *Castor and Patience*/Cincinnati Opera, *The (Re)volution of Steve Jobs*, and Matthew Aucoin's *Eurydice*/Metropolitan Opera.



### MICHAEL BLACK | CHORUS MASTER

The Australian chorus master held this position at Opera Australia in Sydney from 2001 to 2013. Black has served in this capacity for such distinguished organizations as the Edinburgh International Festival, Opera Holland Park (London), and in Australia, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Choir, Motet Choir, the Cantillation chamber choir, and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Other activities include preparing *The Damnation of Faust* chorus at the Grant Park Music Festival, where he has worked for two seasons. As one of Australia's most prominent vocal accompanists, Black has regularly performed for broadcasts and recordings. He has served as chorus master on four continents, and his work has been recorded and/or aired on ABC, BBC, PBS, for many HD productions in movie theaters, and on television. *Michael Black is supported by the Howard A. Stotler Chorus Master Endowed Chair.*



### ERIC SEAN FOGEL | CHOREOGRAPHER

**Previously at Lyric:** *West Side Story* (associate director, 2018/19), *Show Boat* (associate choreographer, 2011/12).

The American director/choreographer's work has recently been seen in *Porgy and Bess* (Seattle Opera); *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *The Marriage of Figaro* (San Diego Opera); *The Lion, Unicorn, and Me* (Kennedy Center); and *Florencia en el Amazonas* and *The Pearl Fishers* (Houston Grand Opera). Fogel is currently on staff at the Glimmerglass Festival as head of stage movement and choreography and the Metropolitan

Opera as an assistant stage director, and choreographed *Show Boat* and *The Ghosts of Versailles* for the 2019 Glimmerglass Festival season. Fogel has created new productions for Atlantic Theatre II, Opéra Bordeaux, Chicago Opera Theater, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, LA Opera, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Opera Philadelphia, Théâtre du Capitole (Toulouse), Theater St. Gallen, XSBN (China), and Washington National Opera.



### SARAH HATTEN | WIGMASTER & MAKEUP DESIGNER

Lyric's wigmaster and makeup designer has worked in a wide repertoire at Des Moines Metro Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Columbus Opera, Toledo Opera, the Cabrillo Music Festival, and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She has also worked at the Glimmerglass Festival and the major opera companies of Los Angeles, Omaha, Cleveland, Sarasota, and Central City, as well as Wisconsin's American Players Theatre and, in Los Angeles, the Pantages Theatre and the Geffen Playhouse. *Sarah Hatten is supported by the Marlys Beider Wigmaster and Makeup Designer Endowed Chair.*



### AUGUST TYE | BALLET MISTRESS

**Previously at Lyric:** 42 productions since 1993/94 as dancer, choreographer, or ballet mistress, most recently *Madama Butterfly*, *Don Giovanni* (both 2019/20).

The American dancer and choreographer's operatic credits include remounting the choreography of Lyric's *Iphigénie en Tauride* at San Francisco Opera and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. She has presented a 20-year retrospective of her work at Chicago's Vittum Theater and Ruth Page Dance Center, as well as in her hometown of Kalamazoo, Michigan. A graduate of Western Michigan University, Tye performed with the Kalamazoo Ballet, dancing leading roles in *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, and *The Nutcracker*. She is a past recipient of Regional Dance America's Best Young Choreographer Award (at age 15) and a two-time recipient of the Monticello Young Choreographer's Award; the latter garnered her invitations to choreograph throughout America. In addition to Lyric and Joel Hall Dancers, she has performed in Chicago with Salt Creek Ballet, Second City Ballet, and Chicago Folks Operetta. Tye is artistic director at the Hyde Park School of Dance, which she founded in 1993. Four years later she founded Tyego Dance Project, which has performed at Steppenwolf, the Athenaeum, and throughout America in a revival of Spike Jones's *Nutcracker*. **L**

# Orchestra & Chorus

## MUSIC STAFF

Elizabeth Askren  
William C. Billingham  
Susan Miller Hult  
Noah Lindquist  
Francesco Miliotto  
Jerad Mosbey  
Matthew Piatt  
Chris Reynolds  
Stefano Sarzani  
Eric Weimer

## ORCHESTRA

### Violin I

Robert Hanford, *Concertmaster*  
Heather Wittels, *Acting*  
*Assistant Concertmaster*  
Alexander Belavsky  
Kathleen Brauer  
Bing Jing Yu  
Laura Miller  
Liba Shacht

### Violin II

Yin Shen, *Principal*  
John Macfarlane, *Assistant Principal*  
Diane Duraffourg-Robinson  
Ann Palen  
Irene Radetzky  
John D. Robinson  
David Volfe  
Albert Wang

### Viola

Carol Cook, *Principal*  
Terri Van Valkinburgh,  
*Assistant Principal*  
Frank W. Babbitt  
Patrick Brennan  
Amy Hess  
Melissa Trier Kirk

### Cello

Calum Cook, *Principal*  
Paul Dwyer\*, *Assistant*  
*Principal*  
Walter Preucil, *Acting Assistant*  
*Principal*  
Mark Brandfonbrener  
William H. Cernota

### String Bass

Ian Hallas, *Principal*  
Samuel Shuhan,  
*Assistant Principal*  
Andrew L. W. Anderson  
Gregory Bryan Sarchet  
Collins R. Trier

### Flute

Marie Tachouet, *Principal*  
Dionne Jackson, *Assistant Principal*  
Alyce Johnson

### Piccolo

Alyce Johnson

### Oboe

Judith Kulb, *Principal*  
Judith Zunamon Lewis,  
*Acting Assistant Principal*

### English Horn

Judith Zunamon Lewis

### Clarinet

Linda A. Baker,  
*Acting Co-Principal,*  
*Co-Assistant Principal*  
Susan Warner,  
*Acting Co-Principal,*  
*Co-Assistant Principal*

### Bass Clarinet

Linda A. Baker

### Bassoon

Preman Tilson, *Principal*  
Lewis Kirk, *Assistant Principal*

### Contrabassoon

Lewis Kirk

### Horn

Jonathan Boen, *Principal*  
Fritz Foss, *Assistant Principal/*  
*Utility*  
Robert E. Johnson, *Third Horn*  
Samuel Hamzem  
Neil Kimel

### Trumpet

William Denton, *Principal*  
Rebecca Oliverio,  
*Acting Assistant Principal*

### Trombone

Jeremy Moeller, *Principal*  
Mark Fisher, *Assistant Principal*

### Tuba

Andrew Smith, *Principal*

### Timpani

Edward Harrison, *Principal*

### Percussion

Douglas Waddell,  
*Acting Principal*  
Eric Millstein  
*Acting Assistant Principal*

### Harp

Lynn Williams\*, *Principal*

### Librarian

John Rosenkrans, *Principal*

### Personnel Manager

Christine Janicki

### Stage Band Contractor

Christine Janicki

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Jennifer Cappelli, *violin*  
Lisa Fako, *violin*  
Renee-Paule Gauthier, *violin*  
Karyn Macfarlane, *violin*  
Rika Seko, *violin*  
Michael Shelton, *violin*  
Sun-Young Gemma Shin, *violin*  
Rose Armbrust Griffin, *viola*  
Rebecca Swan, *viola*  
Paula Kosower, *cello*  
Mara McClain, *cello*  
Tim Shaffer, *bass*  
JJ Koh, *clarinet*  
Mark Fry, *bass trombone*  
Rich Janicki, *percussion*  
Michael Kozakis, *percussion*  
Autumn Selover, *harp*  
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*Chorus Master,*  
*The Howard A. Stotler*  
*Endowed Chair*

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Sharon Garvey Cohen  
Cathleen Dunn  
Desirée Hassler  
Rachael Holzhausen\*  
Laureen Janeczek-Wysocki  
Carla Janzen  
Suzanne M. Kszastowski  
Kimberly McCord  
Heidi Spoor  
Stephani Springer  
Sherry Watkins

\*On leave, 2021/2022 Season

The Lyric Opera Orchestra string sections utilize revolving seating. Players behind the front desk change seats systematically and are listed alphabetically in the roster above.

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Marianna Kulikova  
Colleen Lovinello  
Yvette Smith  
Marie Sokolova  
Emma Sorenson  
Maia Surace  
Corinne Wallace-Crane  
Pamela Williams  
Michelle K. Wrighte

**Tenor**

Geoffrey Agpalo  
Timothy Bradley  
Hoss Brock  
William M. Combs  
John J. Concepcion  
Kenneth Donovan  
Joseph A. Fosselman  
Cullen Gandy  
Cameo T. Humes  
Tyler Samuel Lee  
Thomas L. Potter  
Joe Shadday

**Bass**

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David Govertsen  
Robert Morrissey  
Kenneth Nichols\*  
Craig Springer  
Nicholas Ward  
Ronald Watkins  
Nikolas Wenzel  
Max Wier  
Jonathan Wilson

**CORE SUPPLEMENTARY CHORUS****Soprano**

Katelyn Lee  
Kelsea Webb

**Mezzo**

Katie Ruth Bieber

**Tenor**

Jared V. Esguerra

**Bass**

Nicolai Janitzky  
Vince Wallace

**SUPPLEMENTARY CHORUS****Soprano**

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Rosalind Lee  
Rachel Ann Spund  
Diana Stoic  
Tara Wheeler

**Mezzo**

Christina G. Adams  
Christine Ebiling  
Megan Magsarili  
Emily Price

**Tenor**

Matthew Daniel  
Klaus Georg  
Alex Guerrero  
Jianghai Ho  
Christopher T. Martin

**Bass**

Evan Bravos  
Matthew Carroll  
Michael Cavalieri  
Christopher Filipowicz  
Kirk Greiner  
Stephen Hobe  
Brian Hupp  
Caleb Morgan  
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Lyric

April 1, 2022

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This concert is dedicated to the memory of Lady Gianna Roland Davis, with our love and admiration.

Photo: Kyle Flubacker



# Magical journey

## Andrea Puente Catán welcomes *Florencia en el Amazonas* to Lyric

By Roger Pines



*Florencia en el Amazonas* (Houston Grand Opera).

When Daniel Catán's music is performed in any important venue, it's likely that Andrea Puente Catán will be present. As her late husband's most passionate and persuasive advocate, she's the best possible guide to Catán's musically ravishing, dramatically riveting *Florencia en el Amazonas*, the first Spanish-language opera Lyric Opera of Chicago has ever presented in its mainstage season.

Originally a professional harpist, Puente Catán is former cultural ambassador of California's U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, and currently holds the position of director of major gifts and Hispanic initiatives at San Diego Opera. Nonetheless, her greatest mission is to encourage interest in Catán's music internationally. When reached

via Zoom, she was deep into planning a full-length film of Catán's opera *Rappaccini's Daughter*, a bi-national project to be produced in San Diego and Mexico.

"I think Daniel and I still have a continuing partnership," says Puente Catán. "When you get married, you say 'in life and death.' This is a clear example of going beyond death. I'm Daniel's biggest supporter in the way I dedicate my life to promoting his works. I share them with so many people! It's important that his music continues to be played, and that people's hearts are touched by it."

When San Diego Opera presented *Rappaccini's Daughter* in 1993, Daniel Catán's music was comparatively little known in America; the piece was the first opera by a

Mexican composer to be presented by a major American company. Puente Catán recalls that after seeing the production, David Gockley, general director of Houston Grand Opera at the time, commissioned Catán to write a new opera. Initially, Gockley hoped to launch a producing partnership with Colombia and Mexico, but that never happened; instead, *Florencia en el Amazonas* became a three-company commission, with Houston presenting the premiere in 1996, followed by the other partners—first LA Opera, then Seattle Opera. *Florencia* was finally produced in Mexico earlier this year to celebrate the work's 25th anniversary.

The libretto was the result of a close collaboration between Catán and prominent screenwriter Marcela Fuentes-Berain. The two developed the characters together, and given Catán's own passionate devotion to the printed word, it was fortunate that Fuentes-Berain's writing was exquisitely elegant. Among Catán's many literary friends was another celebrated writer, the late Álvaro Mutis, who had been the best friend of the legendary Gabriel García Márquez. "Álvaro loved boats and rivers," Puente Catán recalls, "and he was actually a big influence on the libretto."

The overriding inspiration for *Florencia* was García Márquez, whose works are pervaded by magical realism. When asked for her perspective on that concept, Puente Catán explains that "it's when fantastical things happen in people's lives. For Latin Americans, it's like those magical moments are integrated into the way we live." An example from her own life reveals exactly what Puente Catán means: "My aunt died, and three days after, I suddenly found her little box with threads and needles and pins on the stairs of my house—yes, this actually happened! Instead of me saying, 'Maybe this dropped from a bag,' I said, 'Oh, my *niña* came to visit and left me this box just to remind me that she's still around.' I'm a Latin American person, and I grew up with the notion of magical realism. There's a fine line between the real and the fantastic. For Latin American people, fantastical things are as concrete as reality! If you asked me today, 'Do you really believe that your aunt came to say hello?', I'd say, 'Yes. She was leaving me her little box to remember her.'"

*Florencia* isn't based on a work of García Márquez, but Catán's piece is steeped in the writer's oeuvre. "Daniel talked about García Márquez's relationship with love in his books . . . the *impossibility* of love; even though there are a lot of characters who *are* in love or *want* to be loved, in the end something happens and the love doesn't continue. García Márquez's writing fascinated Daniel with its marriage between fantastical moments and concreteness. His use of the Spanish language is just

extraordinary. I think Daniel was very drawn to García Márquez's sense of narrative. Also, in *Florencia*, the whole notion of being on a boat searching for one's lost love bears a resemblance to García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*. I invite everyone to read that book after they see *Florencia*, so they can understand exactly what the book and the opera have in common."

Central to the libretto is the boat on which all the action takes place. Its special significance is noted by Puente Catán: "The boat is called the *El Dorado*, a name that has many connotations for Latin Americans. You can think of the Spanish searching for gold, but more than that, the name makes you think of sunshine in your life. Daniel's mother called him not 'my son' but 'my *sun*.' We hear *El Dorado* and think of something that is gold-like, related not to wealth, but to luminosity."

The opera's plot integrates more straightforward characters—the younger and older couples, the captain, and Florencia—with a particularly enigmatic figure: the omnipresent Riolo. Puente Catán describes him as "a creature of magical realism. On the surface he's just an ordinary man who works on the boat, which he knows inside out, but he's also like the wise man of the jungle. When the boat is going into the storm, he has an aria in which he becomes a flying creature. He's like a shaman, in a way—a shaman of love and of the river. He's as real and concrete as you and me, but he can transform himself and speak the language of nature."

The Arcadio-Rosalba character relationship involves much intense emotional discussion of the negative elements of falling in love. Puente Catán considers it "very autobiographical for Daniel—as were all of his works, in a way. They're his love life in different stages.

Writing music is for me a process of self-discovery and self-understanding. I am concerned, especially, with the nature of love. I believe that the experience of love is fleeting, fragile and interminable. I believe it is the only point where life and death intertwine. I believe it is the only moment where time stops and human beings are permitted a taste of immortality. I identify the essence of music with these concerns, and it is through music that I try to capture them and understand them. Above all other art forms, music is privileged when it tries to reach our most intimate feelings. Music always speaks to us with the truth. We do not question it, for we know that it never lies.

—Daniel Catán

In *Florescia*, the music is telling us that Arcadio and Rosalba actually *want* to be together. We hear them saying, ‘Goodbye, I don’t want to be with you’ while the music is saying, ‘I love you.’ That’s an ‘A-ha!’ moment.”

The drama of *Florescia* also is intriguing in its mysterious ending. “The Latin American literary tradition includes several books that end like this—with a question mark,” says Puente Catán. This impression is enforced in the score’s final moments; the music doesn’t end with the root (the strongest note in any chord), but instead emphasizes the fifth note of the scale—the dominant—which lends an uncentered, unsettled feeling to the harmony. “That’s what makes it inconclusive, and I feel it when I hear the final timpani. Daniel wanted it this way so that everyone in the audience could create their own ending. For me, it’s all about Florescia’s energy becoming part of nature.”

*Florescia*’s sound world connects with Catán’s trip down the Amazon at the time he was composing the opera. Puente Catán recalls that he retained a vivid memory of “the early hours of the day, with the sun coming out and all those birds and insects waking up. I think you can hear that a lot in *Florescia* in the flutes, clarinets, and oboes. There’s also an interlude in which the sun comes up and you hear the chirpy sounds of birds.”


Catán’s operas have caused critics to cite certain musical influences (one *Florescia* review mentioned everyone from Puccini and Strauss to Ravel, Debussy, Stravinsky, and John Williams). Puente Catán accepts the fact that “some critics find it impossible to say a composer has his

own style. As the years pass and Daniel’s works continue to be played, everyone knows now that when you hear the first five chords of *Florescia*, this is Daniel Catán! Yes, he was influenced by many composers—Strauss, Debussy, Berg, Stravinsky—but composers aren’t born from nothing. They all have to have some kind of influence. It’s interesting in Daniel’s case: he has clear German and French influences and then Latin American as well. You put these elements together and this is what you get!”

*Florescia*’s orchestral colors make a mesmerizing impact. Puente Catán especially loves the final notes of the opera, scored for violin, piano, harp, and timpani. “Daniel’s combination of timbres is very particular. His use of harp, steel drum, and marimba, which he incorporates into the fabric of the strings, woodwinds, and brass, is amazing.” The *Florescia* score marvelously matches strikingly distinctive sounds with dramatically astute use of specific rhythms. “In the storm music, for example, there’s a combination of rhythms—groups of nine notes with a lot of movement in the orchestra because the boat is sinking. Then, we have this ‘chak-a-chak-a-chak-a:’ the boat engines! Suddenly, the music moves into a  $\frac{3}{4}$  tempo and slows down, and it’s like the sun interrupts the storm as Florescia, Rosalba, and Paula sing about their loved ones. It’s a return to life, with the sound now like a cushion, a wave of strings.”

Lyric is presenting a production of *Florescia* that Puente Catán considers eminently worthy of the piece. “[Director] Francesca Zambello put together an incredible team. The boat is quite large and lifelike, but within it there are some wonderfully intimate moments. When Rosalba and Arcadio are talking about love, they’re in a part of the boat that is almost like a little box within a much larger structure.” Puente Catán also greatly admires the lighting, and the production’s treatment of the Amazon itself. She’s grateful that “Francesca has what I would call an ‘aesthetic respect’ for the opera.”

Andrea Puente Catán hopes Lyric’s performances of *Florescia en el Amazonas* will help to fulfill Daniel Catán’s passionate wish to “give voice to Hispanic artists in America. This was so important to Daniel. It can encompass anything, whether it be art, dance, literature, or music.” She hopes, too, that *Florescia* will leave the audience with a special feeling not only for the opera itself, “but also with the belief that love is possible.”

Roger Pines, former dramaturg of Lyric Opera of Chicago, writes regularly for major opera-related publications internationally and has been a panelist annually on the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts’ Opera Quiz since 2006. He currently teaches an opera repertoire course at Northwestern University’s Bienen School of Music. 



*Florescia en el Amazonas* (Houston Grand Opera)

*Lyric*

# Soprano Ana María Martínez on Daniel Catán and *Florencia en el Amazonas*

## CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH DANIEL CATÁN?

Daniel was always a bright light. He could fill the room with his most positive energy. He was my friend; to sing his music, and in particular, to be in the texture of *Florencia en el Amazonas*, is to feel his presence. It is a true gift.

## HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT CATÁN'S MUSIC AND THE MUSIC OF *FLORENCIA EN EL AMAZONAS*?

Like all brilliant composers, Daniel had his own musical language. In the case of *Florencia*, the entire score is a salute to the literary genre of magical realism; his score is the first time I have ever experienced what it feels like to *hear* magical realism. The genre and concept are very much Latin American, and those of us who are from this culture embrace that lens. Daniel did so with great imagination and beauty.

## YOU HAVE SUNG TWO ROLES IN *FLORENCIA EN EL AMAZONAS*: ROSALBA AND FLORENCIA. WHAT HAS IT BEEN LIKE TO SING TWO DIFFERENT ROLES IN THE SAME OPERA?

I think that in many ways, Rosalba and Florencia are two aspects of one woman. Florencia sees a lot of herself in the young Rosalba and in one scene, gives Rosalba sage life advice, much as if she were advising her younger self.

## WHEN DANIEL CATÁN HEARD YOU SING ROSALBA MANY YEARS AGO, HE EXPRESSED HIS WISH TO HAVE YOU TAKE ON THE TITLE ROLE. YOU'VE SHARED THAT THE ROLE OF FLORENCIA IS VOCALLY CHALLENGING. NOW THAT YOU'VE SUNG *FLORENCIA* WITH HOUSTON AND FLORIDA GRAND OPERAS, HAS IT BECOME EASIER TO PERFORM OVER TIME?

Each role I have sung throughout my career has helped to establish a solid vocal-technical grounding, with several roles being the catalysts for growth and expansion. Once that vocal growth happens, it's equivalent to going through a gateway to the "next level." Once there, I can take on the vocal demands of a role that, prior to reaching that gateway, I may not have had the vocal tools to comfortably sing. Over time, and now singing the role of Florencia in my third production, the role feels much more in my body, like a gymnast performing a routine; the discipline, technique, repetition, and muscle memory is there.


## THIS OPERA, AND THANKFULLY OTHER WORKS BY LATIN AMERICAN COMPOSERS, ARE NOW GAINING GREATER EXPOSURE. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU?

Opera is a gorgeous art form and the only one that unites all of the art forms. The fact that works by Latin American composers and opera in general are gaining greater exposure is wonderful! This solidifies the lasting power of genius, of classics, of beauty!

## DO YOU HAVE ANY FAVORITE PARTS OF THIS OPERA, BE THEY MUSIC, WORDS, OR SPECIFIC SCENES?

I love every moment of this opera, every musical note, and every aspect of the story. Some of my favorite highlights are the quartet in Act I, Riobolo's transformation, the duet in Act II between Rosalba and Arcadio, and Florencia's arias . . . each one is a gem of reflection and self-discovery. All the characters in this piece are in search of love, their true selves, and the deeper meaning of life.

## IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIFIC THAT YOU HOPE AUDIENCES WILL TAKE AWAY FROM SEEING AND HEARING THIS PIECE?

I hope that our audiences will feel their own inner truth—that each one will see themselves represented in each character of this great work, and that they might embrace the power of love and remember that love truly is the source. 





# Director's note



*Florencia en el Amazonas* is a work I am thrilled to present for so many reasons. It is an honor to introduce you to the work of the late contemporary Mexican composer Daniel Catán, as well as a story based on the important literary ideas of Gabriel García Márquez. The production, sung in Spanish, offers a lush visual world evoking the Amazon with stunning projections and evocative choreography. The opera features the great Puerto Rican-American diva Ana María Martínez led by conductor Jordan de Souza in his Lyric debut.

From the 1980s into the early 21st century, some three million Colombians were displaced by political and drug-related violence. It was during this period—in the 1990s—that I went to Colombia with composer Daniel Catán and librettist Marcela Fuentes-Berain to visit

Gabriel García Márquez with the intention of putting together a new opera inspired by his works. We flew to his walled compound deep in the jungle near Cartagena in an open helicopter with protection from guards armed with machine guns. We landed on a helipad near his compound and traveled through the underbrush in a Jeep with our protectors. If that was not enough of a thrill in and of itself, my subsequent meeting and work with Márquez is a memory for life.

The essence of his very being was like the magical realism that spilled onto the pages of his novels. He helped our team to plan and create the libretto, which was executed by his student, Marcela Fuentes-Berain, and to capture the sound world of Daniel's music. After our time in his compound, we went on to visit the Colombian state of Amazonas, where the river begins, to experience its spirit and try to capture it for the stage. Once we checked into the aptly named Hotel Anaconda, we went trekking through the jungle and then onto a riverboat. Our guide thought it was necessary that we see a real anaconda as we were hiking. Once is enough in my lifetime!

After our fantastical visit, we premiered *Florencia en el Amazonas* in 1996 in Houston, and the production transferred to other opera houses in North and Latin America. The opera has been a great success thanks to the musical and dramatic spell it casts on audiences.

Now, in collaboration with our designers, we have created a brand-new production for Lyric to bring the opera into a fresh visual world. I am thrilled that today you have the chance to hear a very different kind of American composer writing in Spanish, the second-most spoken language in our country.

I hope you enjoy this opera that is so close to my heart.

—Francesca Zambello 

*Beyond the stage, and beyond the boundaries that often define opera companies, Lyric is igniting creativity across Chicago. Through innovative learning opportunities, creative exploration, and artistic creation and collaboration, Lyric, with your support, encourages students, educators, families, audiences, and Chicagoans from neighborhoods across the city to share their voices and embrace the power and relevance of opera as a catalyst for growth and change.*



Desirée Hassler (left, Gretel) and Corinne Wallace-Crane (right, Hansel) in Lyric's Opera in the Neighborhoods production of *Hansel and Gretel in the Park*.



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# Beyond the stage

# The thrill of learning

## Lyric's 2021/22 school programming hopes to expand its reach

Lyric Unlimited - Learning & Creative Engagement, Lyric's department dedicated to education and community initiatives, will continue to offer myriad wonderful programs this season. The department is dedicated to connecting the Chicagoland community through a wide range of programs designed to stimulate curiosity, explore new learning and performance formats, and make connections between opera and everyday life. "This year, we're moving forward with a lot of virtual programming," says Drew Smith, Lyric's learning programs manager. "Several longstanding programs pivoted to an online modality last year, so we're now able to create even more pathways for students and teachers to engage with Lyric online." The majority of this season's virtual programs will be provided to teachers free of charge.

**Opera in the Neighborhoods**, a program that brings live performances of youth-focused operas to venues throughout the Chicago area, will utilize a film version of last summer's captivating

production, *Hansel and Gretel in the Park*, to provide a pre-recorded concert for schools. This tremendously successful outdoor opera, mounted this past summer, is an ideal streaming experience for teachers and students to share.

**Explore Opera** will launch in early 2022, and the program will provide teachers with five short videos to explore the who, what, when, where, and why of opera. "There will be additional ways in which teachers can help students explore on their own," says Smith, "including giving them short, compact activities they can use periodically during their regular class day without the need to devote a full class session or day-long field trip." The videos will serve as a teachers' guide to provide an exciting, behind-the-scenes look at Lyric. Each video will be hosted by a Lyric teaching artist and includes footage from the opera house and recent performances. There also are lesson plans and a variety of other resources that can be used for in-person learning to help teachers utilize the videos in



Lyric teaching artist Elise LaBarge teaches "pass the clap" during a residency at Coleman School in Chicago, Illinois that took place prior to the pandemic.



Hoss Brock (Witch) in Lyric's Opera in the Neighborhoods production of *Hansel and Gretel in the Park*.

class. The first Explore Opera series will be available for elementary school students in grades one through five, and the hope is to create more modules in the future to expand the program for middle- and high-school students.

**Elementary Opera Residencies** involve a teaching artist working with students over a 12-week period. Students take a story or topic they're currently studying in class and adapt it into a performance piece through the art of opera and creative storytelling. Based on their chosen themes, they incorporate existing melodies, including music from well-known operas, with lyrics the students create themselves. The entire adaptation is presented in the students' own words.

**High School Choir Residencies** operate through school choruses and provide support for developing Chicago Public School high-school choir programs. Lyric teaching artists assist in the classroom once a week for the entire school year by sharing their expertise in vocal technique with choir directors and doing everything possible to support existing learning goals.

Despite the pandemic, LU - LC&E programs enjoyed a terrific response last year. "We engaged just over 30,000 students and teachers throughout the Chicago area," notes Smith, "including just over 15,000 participants and 200 schools in Chicago Public

School alone, accounting for half of our 30,000 participants during the year. Because everything was digital, we were actually able to reach many more individual schools!" This season, Lyric Unlimited hopes to connect with even more schools through its portfolio of activities.

If you're a teacher, principal, or interested parent, find out more about these programs at [lyricopera.org/learn-engage](https://lyricopera.org/learn-engage). <sup>12</sup>



Lyric chorus master Michael Black works with Senn High School students.



*To keep opera a must-see, must-hear experience, the art form needs outstanding artists who can convey through singing and acting the emotional range and engaging storytelling that are opera's hallmarks. Lyric, through The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center, identifies exceptionally talented emerging artists from around the world and provides them with comprehensive training and performance opportunities. On the world's stages, the Center's impressive roster of alumni continually proves the value of training at Lyric.*



**Standing:** Leroy Davis, Kathleen Felty, Lunga Eric Hallam, Katherine Beck, Martin Luther Clark, Katherine DeYoung, Anthony Reed, Mathilda Edge  
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**Basses**

Rivers Hawkins  
Anthony Reed

**Conductor/Pianist**

Donald Lee III

**Pianist**

Chris Reynolds



# Ryan Opera Center alumni around the world

## MARIO ROJAS

At Lyric this season: *Arcadio/Florencia en el Amazonas*. Previously with Lyric: Eight roles since 2017/18, including *Major Domo/The Queen of Spades* (2019/20), *Alfredo/La traviata* (2018/19).

Like a kid walking into a candy shop, I entered the Lyric Opera House full of dreams with no idea how much my life would change and how much I would learn during my time at the Ryan Opera Center. To this day, it gives me chills to recall that I was given the opportunity to step in and sing *Alfredo* in *La traviata* on the same stage that Simoneau, Kraus, Gedda, Araiza, Hadley, Sabbatini, Calleja, Polenzani, Berrugi, and other greats sang the role. I have nothing but gratitude for every lesson learned, every performance sung, every role crafted, and especially for walking through those historic backstage doors every single day!



## THIS SEASON



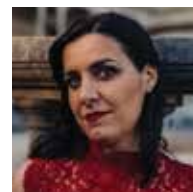
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*Alcina*  
LA Opera



**Patrick Guetti**

*Un ballo in maschera*  
Deutsche Oper Berlin



**Katherine Lerner**

*Parsifal*  
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Kyle Flückner

*Lyric*

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Cecylia Kinder  
Krystina Lowe  
Bryan McDonald  
Kathy Rubel  
Joanna Rzepka  
Marguerite Scott  
Ewa Szylak  
Barbara Szylo  
Megan Turner  
Isaac Turner  
Kristi Wood  
Maggie Zabierowski  
*Wardrobe Staff*

Samantha Holmes,  
*Wardrobe Crew Head*

Scott Barker  
Lauren Crotty  
Dawn Marie Hamilton  
David Hough  
Charlie Junke  
Wendy McCay  
Moira O'Neil  
Dulce Santillan  
Chris Valente  
Roger Weir  
*Dressers*

Sarah Hatten, *Wigmaster and Makeup Designer, The Marlys Beider Endowed Chair*  
Allison Burkholder,  
*Department Coordinator*

Bridget Rzymiski,  
*Wig Crew Foreman*

Necole Bluhm  
Martha Contreras  
Brittany Crinson  
Krista D'Agostino  
Eric Daniels  
Mattison Drobney  
June Gearon  
Ansley Hughes  
Chantelle Marie Johnson  
Lynn Koroulis  
Robert Kuper  
Briette Madrid  
Claire Moores  
Megan Pirtle  
Jada Richardson  
Olivia Roach  
Rick Salazar  
Emily Santiago  
Rachel Stiles  
Kacy Tatus  
Pat Tomlinson  
Emily Young  
*Wig and Makeup Department*

# People of Lyric

## Rachel Tobias - Stage Manager



### WHAT IS YOUR ROLE HERE AT LYRIC, AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU HELD THE POSITION?

I am a stage manager, and have been part of the production department since August 2000. I work with directors and creative teams during the rehearsal process to ensure that they have everything they need for their vision to be realized on stage. I also run the rehearsals for a handful of productions each season. In that capacity, I make sure everyone is in attendance, monitor the scenes to track if singers have the props they need, mark the performers' entrances and exits from the stage for follow-spot purposes, and take notes from the directors and designers on what they might want changed or adjusted. I distribute those notes to the necessary parties, all the while making sure that the production is on track to be ready for its opening performance.

### WHAT KEEPS YOU COMMITTED TO THE WORK YOU DO?

I see opera as a team sport. Working backstage at Lyric, I'm surrounded by so many unsung heroes who are incredibly talented and passionate about their crafts. Their commitment and integrity to creating the best possible work keeps me moving forward and doing my best work. Even though we're not on stage singing or in the orchestra pit playing an instrument, that's still our work up there, and that's amazing to see.

### WHAT LED YOU TO WORK AT LYRIC?

Music has always been a big part of my life. My parents put a guitar in my hand when I was five! I was a Lyric season subscriber during college and would sit in the last row of the upper balcony thinking, "I need to be a part of this somehow." I loved the spectacle of opera

and the way that even in such a vast theater, directors could create an intimate moment for 3,600 people. I majored in piano and vocal performance and was working at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra when I was put in touch with Marina Vecchi, who works in Lyric's rehearsal department. I was eventually hired as a rehearsal assistant and learned all about the company and how I could contribute with my interest and abilities. That led to me becoming an assistant stage manager, and then a stage manager a few years later.

### WHAT'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR JOB THAT PEOPLE MIGHT NOT KNOW?

As stage managers, we know everyone in the company because that's a necessity. We're familiar with the stagehands, dressers, wig and makeup crew, chorus and orchestra members, and most of the administrative staff. My job is one of the few at Lyric that touches every single department. We also are the ones who work most closely with the designers, directors, and creative teams, because we are the liaison between them and the rest of the company.

### A FAVORITE LYRIC MOMENT?

After two decades at Lyric, I have had many favorite onstage and offstage moments. I greatly enjoy projects that are off the beaten path. *Chicago Voices* was one of the more rewarding performances in my career. It was a long 20-hour day, but being an integral part of the process and helping to create such a meaningful and fulfilling concert that people still talk about 3 years later is very rewarding. *Jesus Christ Superstar* is also another big highlight. One of my favorite offstage moments was in a lighting session before we added the cast for an onstage rehearsal. We were trying to get the timing correct for one of the numbers, and instead of pulling up the music on an iPhone, we all started singing the song...the whole song. I have to say, for a bunch of tech people, we sure can hold a tune!

### WHAT'S THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB?

Communication. It's the job of the stage managers to synthesize the notes we receive during the rehearsals and get those notes to the correct people. If a director or designer decides to change even a tiny detail, that change can affect four or five different departments. I have to make sure those notes are being communicated accurately.

### BEYOND OPERA, WHAT ARE YOUR OTHER PASSIONS?

Because I spend so much time in a dark theater, I enjoy being outside as much as possible outside of work. My husband and I have two sons and a rescue dog, and we love being active: anything from hiking to swimming to basketball and everything in between. Spending time together around a firepit at night is our idea of fun. We're an extremely energetic bunch! 