

SD OPERA Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 14, 2017

Contact: Edward Wilensky (619) 232-7636

Edward.Wilensky@sdopera.org

San Diego Opera's Main Stage Season Closes on March 17, 2018 with Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas*

***All Spanish speaking cast led by soprano Elaine Alvarez
as Florencia***

***Most famous work by Mexican composer Daniel Catán
inspired by the Magical Realism of author Gabriel
García Márquez***

San Diego, CA – San Diego Opera's 2017-2018 mainstage season comes to close with Daniel Catán's ode to magic realism, *Florencia en el Amazonas*, which opens on **Saturday, March 17, 2018 at 7 PM at the San Diego Civic Theatre**. Additional performances are March 20, 23, and 25 (matinee), 2018. Daniel Catán's history with the Company goes back quite some time as San Diego Opera gave Catán's opera, *Rappacini's Daughter*, its American premiere, making him the first Mexican composer to have his work presented professionally in the United States. The success of *Rappacini's Daughter* led to international acclaim that resulted in the commissioning for *Florencia en el Amazonas* by Houston Grand Opera.

Loosely inspired by Gabriel García Márquez's novel, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, the opera follows the fictional opera singer Florencia Grimaldi as she returns to perform in her home town with the hopes of attracting the attention of her long lost love who has vanished in the Amazon forest collecting butterflies. As she journeys down the Amazon on a riverboat, Florencia becomes entwined in the lives of the other passengers whose conversations and passions lead her to self-realization and a metamorphosis. With lush orchestration reminiscent of Puccini and Debussy, and the sounds of nature written into the score, San Diego Opera is proud to welcome back the work of composer Daniel Catán in this exciting production.

Making a welcome house debut is soprano **Elaine Alvarez** as the opera singer Florencia. She is joined by **Maria Fernanda Castillo** also in a Company debut, as Rosalba, a journalist who is traveling in hopes of

interviewing Florencia. Tenor **Daniel Montenegro**, who makes a welcome return after having last been heard as Luis in *El Pasado Nunca se Termina (The Past Is Never Finished)*, sings the role of Arcadio, the riverboat captain's nephew and Rosalba's love interest. Baritone **Luis Alejandro Orozco** makes his Company debut as Riolobo, the boat's mate, and also the narrator of the opera who acts as an intermediary between reality and the magical realism of the river. Also in Company debuts are mezzo-soprano **Adriana Zabala** as Paula and baritone **Levi Hernandez** as Paula's lover Alvaro, who are also passengers on the boat. Rounding out the cast is bass **Hector Vásquez** as the boat's captain. Maestro **Joseph Mechavich**, who has led the orchestra for performances of *Moby-Dick*, *Nixon in China*, and *Great Scott*, returns to the podium. Stage director and choreographer **Candice Evans**, in her Company debut, remounts her staging of this opera which she created at Indiana University.

Performed in Spanish with English translations above the stage, these are the first Company performances of *Florencia en el Amazonas*.

This production was originally designed for the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University and created by The Indiana University Opera and Ballet Theater. The sets are designed by **Mark Frederic Smith** and the costumes were designed by **Linda Pisano**. The Lighting Designer is **Todd Hensley**.

Florencia en el Amazonas will have a radio broadcast on Saturday, March 24, 2018 at 8 PM on KPBS radio, 89.5 FM (97.7 FM Calexico) and online at www.kpbs.org

Pre-production photos can be found online at: <https://sandiegoopera.smugmug.com/San-Diego-Opera-20172018-Preproduction-Artwork/>

The Cast

Elaine Alvarez, Florencia Grimaldi

San Diego Opera debut. Cuban American Soprano Elaine Alvarez's notable engagements include Mimi in *La bohème* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera National de Bordeaux, Teatro Carlo Felice, Virginia Opera, and Arizona Opera, the title role of *Katya Kabanova* with Boston Lyric Opera, Elvira in *Ernani* for the Royal Opera de Wallonie, Magda in *La rondine* with Opera Frankfurt and Lithuania's Pazaislis Music Festival, Micaela in *Carmen* for Florida Grand Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Opera Cleveland, La Comtesse de Breville in *The Greater Good* for Glimmerglass Opera, Violetta in *La traviata* for Theater St. Gallen and Bayerische Staatsoper, and the title role of *Rappaccini's Daughter* for Gotham Chamber Opera. As a resident ensemble artist with Oper Leipzig, she was heard as Mimi, Violetta and Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, and was featured in productions of *La rondine* and *Don Giovanni* in the role of Donna Anna. A dedicated recital and concert artist, Ms. Alvarez was a Grand Prize Winner of the Marilyn Horne Foundation Competition, making her New York recital debut under the auspices of the Foundation. She then went on to perform as a featured artist in the Marilyn Horne Foundation Gala Recital at Carnegie Hall in 2010. Other notable recital engagements have included New York's ¡Sí Cuba! Festival, a full-length recital with Orchestra Miami, and a Kennedy Center recital debut with the prestigious Vocal Arts Society. On the concert stage, she has appeared as a featured guest artist with the New World Symphony for *Pulse 2.0*, integrating electronic music, lighting installations and modern stage-craft, to bring classical music to new audiences. Other distinguished concert credits include Mozart's *Mass in C minor* with the Gewandhaus Orchestra at Hong Kong's Cultural Performing Arts Center and a tour of Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with the Orchestra e Coro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino.

María Fernanda Castillo, Rosalba

San Diego Opera debut. Mexican soprano María Fernanda Castillo has performed in Rockefeller Center, the Canadian Vocal Arts Institute, the Israeli Opera House, and the Ópera de Bellas Artes in Mexico City,

among many others. Ms. Castillo's repertoire includes such roles as Mimi in *La bohème*, Inès in *Il trovatore*, Baucis in *Philemon und Baucis*, La bergère in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, and roles in various zarzuela galas. She has also sung complete works, such as Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été* and Bruckner's *Te Deum*. She started her operatic career in 2010 after winning awards at several important international competitions. Castillo received an International Society of Mexican Arts Talents (SIVAM) scholarship for operatic studies, the scholarship for the Advanced Opera Workshop of the SIVAM, and she participated in the Estudio de Ópera de Bellas Artes (EOBA) workshop, all in Mexico City. She recently won the Promising Young Artist Award as well as third place and the PROA Prize in the Carlo Morelli National Singing Competition, the most prestigious singing competition in Mexico. She also won third place, as well as the Bellas Artes prize in successive years, in the Sinaloa International Singing Competition, and first place and the Audience Choice award in the Canadian Vocal Arts Institute Competition in Montréal, Canada.

Daniel Montenegro, Arcadio

American tenor Daniel Montenegro's made his Company debut in the 2015 season as Luis in *El Pasado Nunca se Termina (The Past Is Never Finished)* which he also performed at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Houston Grand Opera. Notable engagements include Giovanni in *Rappaccini's Daughter* with Gotham Chamber Opera, Mario in *Il Postino* at Théâtre du Châtelet, Roderigo in *Otello* with San Francisco Opera, Alfredo in *La traviata* with New Orleans Opera and Minnesota Opera, Nemorino in *The Elixir of Love* with Washington National Opera, Pang in *Turandot* at the Hollywood Bowl conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, Pong in *Turandot* with San Francisco Opera and The Dallas Opera, Roméo in *Roméo and Juliette* with Tulsa Opera and the Castleton Festival, Mario with Opera Saratoga, and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* with Arizona Opera. As a San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and former Resident Artist of the Minnesota Opera, Daniel has sung a wealth of roles including Liverotto and Rustighello in *Lucrezia Borgia*, Remendado and Dancaïro in *Carmen*, Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, Nick in *The Handmaid's Tale*, and Flavio in *Norma*. Additionally, he has sung the role of the Steersman in *The Flying Dutchman* with both Portland Opera and Arizona Opera and the Shepherd in *Oedipus Rex* at the Sydney Festival and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. An ongoing collaboration with Los Angeles Opera has brought appearances in several productions including the world premiere of Lee Holdridge's *Concierto para Mendez*, *La traviata*, *Carmen*, *Luisa Fernanda*, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, and *Il tabarro*.

Luis Alejandro Orozco, Riolobo

San Diego Opera debut. Mexican American baritone Luis Alejandro Orozco's recent engagements include Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* for Florentine Opera and Syracuse Opera, Escamillo in *Carmen* for Michigan Opera Theater and Des Moines Metro Opera, Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliette* with Lyric Opera of Baltimore, Austin Lyric Opera, and Opera Grand Rapids, Belcore in *The Elixir of Love* and Taddeo in *The Italian Girl in Algiers* for Opera Santa Barbara, Payador in *Maria de Buenos Aires* for Anchorage Opera, Aspen Music Festival, Florida Grand Opera, and Cincinnati Opera, Riolobo for Arizona Opera and Washington National Opera, Hannah before in *As One* for Urban Aria, Perichaud in *La rondine* for Opera Theater for Saint Louis, the title role of *Don Giovanni* for Opera Western Reserve, Lalo in *Fallujah* for Kennedy Center World Stages, Marcello in *La bohème* for Kentucky Opera, Harry Easter in *Street Scene*, Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* and the title roles of *Don Giovanni* and *Julius Caesar* for the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, Dancaire in *Carmen* for Lake George Opera, and Papageno in *The Magic Flute* for Seoul International Opera Festival.

Adriana Zabala, Paula

San Diego Opera debut. American mezzo-soprano Adriana Zabala engagements include the title role of *The Adventures of Pinocchio* at the Minnesota Opera, Barbarian Girl in *Waiting for the Barbarians* with the Austin Lyric Opera, the title role of the world premiere *Sister Carrie* with The Florentine Opera, Rosie Chaney in the world premiere of *The Manchurian Candidate* with Minnesota Opera, Joanna in *Romulus Hunt* with Nashville Opera, Sesto in Handel's *Julius Caesar* with The Florentine Opera,

Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro* with both The Florentine Opera and the Jacksonville Symphony, the role of Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* with Opera Saratoga, Annina in *Der Rosenkavalier* with The Minnesota Orchestra, recitalist with the Salzburg International Chamber Music Concerts, soloist with The Jerusalem Symphony, and the role of Isabella Linton in *Wuthering Heights* with Minnesota Opera. She has been seen on the stages of The Seattle Opera, The Minnesota Opera, Opera Lyra Ottawa, Wolf Trap Opera, the Wildwood Festival, The Syracuse Opera, the Arizona Opera, the Atlanta Opera, the Lyric Opera of San Antonio, Opera Carolina, the Lake George Opera, Opera Pacific, and Utah Opera, among others. Her most frequently performed traditional roles are Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, the title role of *Cinderella*, and Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Other career highlights include many appearances with the New York Festival of Song, soloist at the Caramoor International Music Festival with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, alto soloist with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, recitals in the Barns at Wolf Trap, the The Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, The Dallas Museum of Art, Ventford Hall in Lenox, MA, and in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. Ms. Zabala made her European debut as Mercedes in *Carmen* at the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia. She is a member of the voice faculty at the University of Minnesota.

Levi Hernandez, Alvaro

San Diego Opera debut. American baritone Levi Hernandez's notable engagements include Dandini in *Cinderella* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with Houston Grand Opera, Arizona Opera, and Chattanooga Symphony & Opera, Alvaro with Arizona Opera, Germont in *La traviata* with Opera Roanoke and the Shippensburg Festival, Sonora in *La fanciulla del West* with Opera Omaha, The Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Guglielmo/Remigio *Le villi/ La Navarraise* at Bard Music Festival, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with both Arizona Opera and Chattanooga Symphony & Opera, Handel's *Alexander's Feast* with Music of the Baroque, the *Messiah* with Northwestern University and Pa Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath* in his return to Opera Theatre of St. Louis.

Hector Vásquez, Capitan

Baritone Hector Vásquez was heard in 2000's *La bohème* as Marcello. He is a native of California and has appeared throughout the United States as a soloist in concert repertoire and opera. Recent engagements include the role of the Forester in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* with Houston Grand Opera. Mr. Vásquez has performed for ten seasons with the Metropolitan Opera since his debut in 1995 as Beaumarchais in *The Ghosts of Versailles*. He has appeared in subsequent MET seasons in *Carmen*, *Rigoletto*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Capriccio*, *La Traviata*, and *the Merry Widow*. Mr. Vásquez has performed leading roles with many opera companies in the United States: Houston Grand Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Seattle Opera, San Francisco Opera, Opera Omaha, Cleveland Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera. He has performed under the batons of many of the world's finest conductors: Pierre Boulez, Richard Bonyngue, Valery Gergiev, James Levine, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Simon Rattle, Nello Santi, and Patrick Summers. In demand as a teacher, clinician, and adjudicator; he has given Master Classes at California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo, California State University Bakersfield, El Paso Opera, the Astoria Music Festival, and Cedar Rapids Opera Theater. He has also served as adjunct Professor of Voice at the University of Southern California, and California State University, Los Angeles. Mr. Vásquez was Program Director for the Houston Grand Opera Studio from 2006 to 2008.

Joseph Mechavich, Conductor

American Conductor Joseph Mechavich made his Company debut in the 2012 season leading the performances of *Moby-Dick*, retuning in 2015 for *Nixon in China* and in 2016 for *Great Scott*. He is the Principal Conductor and Music Director for Kentucky Opera, where he has conducted *La bohème*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Carmen*. Recent performances include *Romeo and Juliet* for Florida Grand Opera, *Susannah* for The Florentine Opera, *The Barber of Seville* at Washington National Opera, *Porgy and Bess* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Madama Butterfly* at New York City Opera, *La bohème* at Dayton

Opera and *Cendrillon* at the Aspen Music Festival. Mechavich was the Principal Conductor for Opera Birmingham from 2004-10, conducting *Turandot*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La bohème*, *La traviata*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Aida*, *La Cenerentola* and *The Barber of Seville*. He has also presided over highly-recognized productions for Calgary Opera, Utah Opera, Tulsa Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Sugar Creek Festival, Pine Mountain Music Festival, Oberlin Opera Theatre, Lake George Opera Festival, Virginia Opera, Fargo-Moorhead Opera and Spokane Opera. Others companies with which he has collaborated include Austin Lyric Opera, New Orleans Opera, Mobile Opera, Nevada Opera and Berkshire Opera.

Candace Evans, Stage Director and Choreographer

San Diego Opera debut. Notable work by American stage director and choreographer Candace Evans includes *Three Decembers* for Fort Worth Opera, *L'Italiana in Algeri* for Opera Southwest, *La Viuda Alegre* for Teatro Colón, *The Merry Widow*, *Don Pasquale*, and *La Wally* for The Dallas Opera, *Carmen* and *Eugene Onegin* for Madison Opera, *Pagliacci* and *Cavalleria rusticana* for Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, *Florencia en el Amazonas* and *Werther* for Indiana University Opera, *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Opera San Jose, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Norma* for Knoxville Opera, *Little Women* for Madison Opera, *Carmen* for Opera Grand Rapids, *La bohème* for Opera Grand Rapids, and *Akhnaten* for Indianapolis Opera and Indiana University Opera.

Marc Frederic Smith, Scenic Designer

American set designer Mark Frederic Smith is also the director of scenic painting and properties for the Jacobs School of Music Opera and Ballet Theater, where he has worked on over a hundred productions during the past 20 years. Design work for Jacobs-related projects includes *Transformations* and *Maria de Buenos Aires*, assistant designer on the world premiere of Ned Rorem's *Our Town*, and the reworking of Max Rothlisberger's classic design for *Hansel and Gretel* in 2013. In addition to his work for Indianapolis Civic Theater, Butler Ballet, and Indianapolis Ballet School, he has designed over a dozen Cardinal Stage Company shows including *Les Miserables*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *My Fair Lady*, *Big River*, and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. He earned a Master's of Fine Art in Scenic Design from the Indiana University Department of Theatre and Drama.

Linda Pisano, Costume Designer

Costume designer Linda Pisano designs for theater, dance, musical theater, ballet, and opera throughout the United States; her ballet designs have toured the UK and Canada. An award winning designer, her work has been featured in the Quadrennial World Design Expo in Prague and the World Stage Design exhibition, and a three-time winner of the National Stage Expo for performance design, and a four-time recipient of the Peggy Ezekiel Award for Excellence in Design. Her work was selected from top designers in the United States to be featured in a world design exhibition with the Bakhrushin Museum in Moscow and the China Institute of Stage Design in Beijing. As professor of costume design at Indiana University, she directs their Theatre and Drama study abroad program in London, heads the Design and Technology Area, and co-authored the recent book *The Art and Practice of Costume Design*. She designs professionally with many companies including Utah Shakespeare Festival, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Opera San Antonio, BalletMet, The Jacobs School of Music and Lyric Repertory. Some of her most recent work around the country includes *Miranda*, *Protean Hearts*, *Anne Frank*, *As You Like It*, *Salome*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Oklahoma!*, *Twelfth Night*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Chicago*, *Dead Man Walking*, *A Little Night Music*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *Akhnaten*, as well as *Music Man* and *Madama Butterfly*, both at the Jacobs School of Music. She serves on the board of directors for the United States Institute for Theatre Technology.

Performance Schedule

Saturday March 17, 2018 7 PM

Tuesday	March 20, 2018	7 PM
Friday	March 23, 2018	7 PM
Sunday	March 25, 2018	2 PM

Get Connected

Stars in the Salon

Meet the singers, conductor and director in this informal panel discussion at San Diego Opera's Stars in the Salon. Now held on Saturdays (with the exception of this season's *Turandot* which is on Thursday, February 15), the Stars in the Salon event for this opera will be held on **Saturday, March 10, 2018 at 4:00 PM** in the Beverly Sills Salon, Civic Theatre. Free.

Pre-Opera Lectures

These 30-minute informative lectures for the main stage operas take place in the Civic Theatre one hour prior to every performance and offer wonderful insights into the production audience members are about to see. These lectures are free to all ticket holders.

Post-Opera Talkbacks

Join the cast, crew, musicians and artists right after the performance of the main stage operas for an engaging, entertaining and informative Q&A session moderated by a San Diego Opera staff member. These lectures are held in the Civic Theatre and are free to all ticket holders.

San Diego Opera Podcast Series

Get to know the artists and operas of the 2017-2018 Season. These insights into the singers and productions can be enjoyed by opera fans as well as those who are new to the art form. Casual and fun, this is a great way to learn about our artists and the operas they star in. Watch online at <http://www.sdopera.org/Company/Education/Podcasts>. These videos are also available on our YouTube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/SanDiegoOpera>

San Diego Opera on Twitter

Get frequent updates about San Diego Opera and opera in general by following us on Twitter. Follow tweets from backstage during a performance and learn about special offers and contests before anyone else by following us @SDOpera.

San Diego Opera on Facebook

San Diego Opera's Facebook page offers a place for fellow opera fans to discuss performances, opera news, connect with other fans and get up-to-date information on upcoming events. Look for "San Diego Opera" at <https://www.facebook.com/SanDiegoOpera/>

San Diego Opera on YouTube

Now viewers can watch a large portion of San Diego Opera's programming at their convenience on YouTube. Archived versions of *OperaTalk!*, *Stars in the Salon*, *Opera Spotlight*, our video podcast series and much more can be found on the San Diego Opera channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/SanDiegoOpera>

San Diego Opera on Instagram

A picture is worth a thousand words! Take a look at what happens backstage and in the office on San Diego Opera's Instagram page. <http://instagram.com/sandiegoopera>

Purchasing Tickets

A subscription for the two remaining Main Stage operas begins at a low \$72.

Single tickets start at \$48 for all mainstage performances. Single tickets start at \$35 for all dētour Series operas. Children prices exist, please visit www.sdopera.org or call 619.533.7000 for more information.

Senior citizen discounts of 15% are available to the Main Stage series on Tuesday and Friday subscription packages. Senior citizen discounts of 15% are available to the dētour Series on Saturday subscription packages.

Military discounts (active and retired) of 50% are available to the Main Stage series on Tuesday and Friday subscription packages. Military discounts of 50% are available to the dētour Series on Saturday subscription packages.

For information about tickets please visit www.sdopera.org or call 619.533.7000

The 2017-2018 International Season

<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	Gilbert & Sullivan	October 14, 17, 20, and 22 (mat), 2017
<i>As One</i>	Laura Kaminsky	November 10, 11 and 12 (1 PM, mat), 2017
<i>Maria de Buenos Aires</i>	Ástor Piazzolla	January 26, 27 and 28 (mat), 2018
<i>Turandot</i>	Giacomo Puccini	February 24, 27, March 2, and 4 (mat), 2018
<i>Florenca en el Amazonas</i>	Daniel Catán	March 17, 20, 23, and 25 (mat) 2018
<i>One Amazing Night – Greer Grimsley & Lise Lindstrom in Concert</i>		May 5, 2018

San Diego Opera Mission Statement

The mission of San Diego Opera is to deliver exceptional vocal performances and exciting, accessible programs to diverse audiences, focusing on community engagement and the transformative power of live performance.

San Diego Opera Vision Statement

The San Diego Opera will be recognized internationally as a leading example of adaptability, innovation and sustainability in the operatic arts, promoting diversified programming and unique performance venues with world-class and emerging talent.

San Diego Opera Core Values Statement

Through excellence in innovative programming and education, SDO provides a lasting cultural service to the community.

- Our tradition of excellence in fully staged opera is augmented with new models of opera and venues. Our unique and deep commitment to the community propels us to explore ways of increasing affordability and accessibility.
- Through fiscal responsibility and nimble adaptation to the changing marketplace, we protect the future of San Diego Opera.
- Our educational and community involvement coupled with relevant programming will build the audience of the future.

www.sdopera.org

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