

SD OPERA Media Release

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San Diego Opera's 2021-2022 Season Opens with Three Intimate Concerts

Stephanie Blythe in Concert
Saturday, October 23, 2021
The Balboa Theatre

Michelle Bradley in Concert
Saturday, November 20, 2021
Sunday, November 21, 2021 (matinee)
Baker-Baum Recital Hall at The Conrad

Arturo Chacón-Cruz in Concert
Friday, December 3, 2021
California Center for the Performing Arts

**The Conrad Prebys Foundation – 2021 Season
Sponsor**

San Diego, CA – San Diego Opera's safe return to indoor performances begins with three intimate concerts showcasing some of today's most exciting singers with a varied and diverse repertoire of opera, show tunes, spirituals, and zarzuela, as well as a number of surprises.

The Fall 2021 Season will begin an intimate recital with mezzo-soprano and operatic superstar **Stephanie Blythe on Saturday, October 23, 2021 at 7:30 PM at The Balboa Theatre**. Stephanie has created a concert entitled *Johnny Mercer: America's Lyricist*. "This concert is a musical and historical look at the words and songs of Johnny Mercer and those who influenced and partnered with him, from the early years of Jazz, to Tin Pan Alley, and eventually, Hollywood," shares Stephanie. "Mercer's extraordinary abilities as a wordsmith and performer cannot be underestimated, as the songs and stories will tell you. Mercer was a born communicator, who had an innate understanding of how to connect with his audience- a perfect subject for a recital/cabaret, my absolute favorite kind of performance, one that establishes an easy, person to person connection with the audience through shared emotional experiences." Stephanie Blythe made her Company debut in 2014's *A Masked Ball* as Ulrica, sang in the Company's Verdi *Requiem* that same year, and returned in recital later that fall for *We'll Meet Again: The Songs of Kate Smith*. She was scheduled to sing the title role of *Gianni Schicchi* last season, the first time the lead role was to be sung by a mezzo-soprano, but that production has now been postponed to the 2022-2023 season. She will be accompanied on piano by **Ryan McCullough**.

After making her exciting Company debut in the title role of *Aida* in 2019, and performing as the special musical guest for the Company's 2021 Gala, San Diego Opera is delighted to welcome back soprano **Michelle Bradley** for an intimate concert on **Saturday, November 20, 2021 at 7:30 PM at The Conrad Performing Arts Center, Baker Baum Recital Hall**. "I find that concerts are extremely significant. I enjoy the personal interaction with my audience via eye contact and I feel that I have more liberty with text coloring. Concerts are not only a performance and exposure opportunity, but they also allow a singer to individually introduce themselves to their audience in a unique and authentic way," shares Michelle. She has created a program that highlights the best qualities of her voice, comprised of opera and art songs, that will also include a celebration of American composers. She will also showcase an aria from one of the upcoming opera roles she will sing in the 21/22 season. She will be accompanied on piano by **Brian Zeger**. A second performance has been added and will be held on Sunday, November 21, 2021 at 4 PM.

The Fall Concert Series closes with a very exciting Company debut by tenor **Arturo Chacón-Cruz on Friday, December 3, 2021 at 7:30 PM at the California Center for the Performing Arts, Escondido**. Arturo Chacón-Cruz has established himself in recent years as a leading tenor with exciting appearances in renowned theaters and concert halls across the globe. He has sung over 60 roles in more than 30 countries. He is the 2005 winner of the Operalia Competition. Mr. Chacón-Cruz has prepared an exciting concert of opera favorites, zarzuela, mariachi, and personal favorites. "Concerts are a good way to allow oneself to be vulnerable and to process a lot of what we are feeling. I want it to be cathartic. I want it to be something that will encourage you, if you have tears in you, to let them out; if you have despair to change it for hope. Music has this ability to look within. It can also make you sad. But through the sadness and the tears is how you take those feelings out and change them for something more positive." He will be accompanied on piano by **Roberto Berrocal**.

The Fall 2021 Concert Series is made possible in part by our 2021 Season Sponsor, **The Conrad Prebys Foundation**.

Artist Bios

Stephanie Blythe, Mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe made her Company debut in 2014's *A Masked Ball* as Ulrica, sang in the Company's Verdi *Requiem* in 2014, and returned in recital that same year for *We'll Meet Again: The Songs of Kate Smith*. Ms. Blythe has sung in many of the renowned opera houses in the US and Europe including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, and the Opera National de Paris. Her many roles include the title roles

in *Carmen*, *Samson et Dalila*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *La Grande Duchesse*, *Tancredi*, *Mignon*, and *Giulio Cesare*; Frugola, Principessa, and Zita in *Il Trittico*, Fricka in both *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*, Azucena in *Il trovatore*, Ulrica, Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress*, Ježibaba in *Rusalka*, Jocasta in *Oedipus Rex*, Mere Marie in *Dialogues des Carmélites*; Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff*, and Ino/Juno in *Semele*. She also created the role of Gertrude Stein in Ricky Ian Gordon's *27* at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Ms. Blythe has also appeared with many of the world's finest orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Orchestra of New York, Minnesota Orchestra, Halle Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Ensemble Orchestre de Paris, and the Concertgebouworkest. She has also appeared at the Tanglewood, Cincinnati May, and Ravinia festivals, and at the BBC Proms. The many conductors with whom she has worked include Harry Bicket, James Conlon, Charles Dutoit, Mark Elder, Christoph Eschenbach, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Alan Gilbert, James Levine, Fabio Luisi, Nicola Luisotti, Sir Charles Mackerras, John Nelson, Antonio Pappano, Mstislav Rostropovitch, Robert Spano, Patrick Summers, and Michael Tilson Thomas. A frequent recitalist, Ms. Blythe has been presented in recital in New York by Carnegie Hall in Stern Auditorium and Zankel Hall, Lincoln Center in both its Great Performers Series at Alice Tully Hall and its American Songbook Series at the Allen Room, Town Hall, the 92nd Street Y, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She has also been a performer at the Vocal Arts Society and at the Supreme Court in Washington, DC; the Cleveland Art Song Festival, the University Musical Society in Ann Arbor, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Shriver Hall in Baltimore, and San Francisco Performances. A champion of American song, Ms. Blythe has premiered several song cycles written for her including *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson* by the late James Legg, *Covered Wagon Woman* by Alan Smith which was commissioned by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and recorded with the ensemble (CMS Studio Recordings); and *Vignettes: Ellis Island*, also by Alan Smith and featured in a special television program entitled *Vignettes: An Evening with Stephanie Blythe and Warren Jones*. Ms. Blythe starred in the Metropolitan Opera's live HD broadcasts of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Il Trittico*, *Rodelinda*, and the complete Ring Cycle. She also appeared in PBS's *Live From Lincoln Center* broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic's performance of *Carousel* and her acclaimed show, *We'll Meet Again: The Songs of Kate Smith*. Her recordings include her solo album, *as long as there are songs* (Innova), and works by Mahler, Brahms, Wagner, Handel and Bach (Virgin Classics). Ms. Blythe's many engagements have also included her return to the Metropolitan Opera for *The Rake's Progress*, the Lyric Opera of Chicago for *Il trovatore*, the Seattle Opera for *Semele*, *Samson and Dalilah* with the Atlanta Symphony, and Carnegie Hall for a recital in Stern Auditorium. She recently performed with the San Francisco Opera as Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* and the Houston Grand Opera as Nettie Fowler in *Carousel*. She also performed her new program, *Sing, America!* at Carnegie Hall. Ms. Blythe was named *Musical America's* Vocalist of the Year for 2009. Her other awards include the 2007 *Opera News* Award and the 1999 Richard Tucker Award. She is also the Artistic Director of the Fall Island Vocal Arts Seminar at the Crane School of Music.

Michelle Bradley, Soprano

Soprano Michelle Bradley made her Company debut in the title role of *Aida* in 2019. She made notable debuts in Frankfurt as Leonora in *La Forza del Destino*, in Nancy, France and Erfurt, Germany as the title role in *Aida*, the Deutsche Oper Berlin in staged performances of Verdi's *Requiem*, and returned to the Metropolitan Opera as Clotilde in *Norma*. This season, she makes debuts with the Vienna State Opera as Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, the San Francisco Opera as Elvira in *Ernani*, and will return to the Metropolitan Opera for their New Year's Eve Gala as Liù in *Turandot*. Future projects include debuts with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and returns to the Metropolitan Opera, all in leading roles. In concert, she appeared in Sir Michael Tippett's *A Child of our Time* with the Orchestre de Paris, sang the soprano solo in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Philadelphia Orchestra, made her debut at the Cincinnati May Festival in the *Verdi Requiem*, and sang in recital under the auspices of the

George London Foundation in Miami and New York City. She is a recipient of the Leonie Rysanek Award from the George London Foundation, the Hildegard Behrens Foundation Award, and is a first place winner in the Gerda Lissner and the Serge and Olga Koussevitzky vocal competitions. She is the 2014 grand prize winner of The Music Academy of the West's Marilyn Horne Song Competition, and is a recent graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

Arturo Chacón-Cruz, Tenor

San Diego Opera debut. A native of Sonora, Mexico, tenor **Arturo Chacón-Cruz**, has established himself in recent years as a leading tenor with exciting appearances in renowned theaters and concert halls across the globe. He has sung over 60 roles in more than 30 countries. Since winning Plácido Domingo's Operalia Competition in 2005, Arturo's career has seen a successful and steady development. His repertoire spans from Bellini and Donizetti to Puccini and Verdi. Some of his more sought after roles are: Rodolfo, the Duke of Mantua, Alfredo, Jacopo Foscari, Gabriele Adorno, B.F. Pinkerton, Hoffmann, Werther, and Roméo to name a few. He has sung private recitals for His Majesties Queen Sofia and King Juan Carlos of Spain, as well as another one for all the leaders of Iberoamerica, and His Majesty King Felipe of Spain. Highlights include role debuts as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, Ismael in *Nabucco*, and Rodolfo in Verdi's *Luisa Miller* in Oviedo, Valencia and Barcelona respectively. He also sang his first Nemorino in Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* in Palermo, Italy and afterwards he performed it again in Macau, China. Other recent performances include: The Duke in *Rigoletto* (Verona, Naples, Budapest, Hamburg, Los Angeles and Florence), *La bohème* (San Francisco and Hamburg), *La traviata* (Munich, Valencia, Moscow, Rome, Barcelona, Verona and Oman), Ruggero in *La Rondine* in Genova, Faust in Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* in Mexico City's Bellas Artes, the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires and at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, Werther in Barcelona and Budapest, Des Grieux in Massenet's *Manon* in Monte Carlo, Don José in *Carmen* (Tel Aviv, Lyon, Tampere, Palermo and Zurich), as well as a critically acclaimed role debut as Macduff in *Macbeth* in Los Angeles and later in Vienna. In addition to an extensive existing operatic discography, the artist's first solo CD is available. "Arturo Chacón le canta a México", features some of the most beautiful Mexican music ever written, and is accompanied by the Orquesta Filarmónica de Sonora. Arturo's Mariachi recordings "De México para el Mundo" and "De mi Casa a tu Casa" were recently released, including a duet with his wife Venetia-Maria Stelliou, as well as his first ever English language recording "A Christmas Wonderland." Chacón-Cruz has received many honors and awards throughout the years. The most recent one being the "Moncayo Medal" in Jalisco, Mexico, he was also "GQ Man of the Year 2018" in Mexico. He was the "Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Emerging Star" of 2017 for the San Francisco Opera. He received the Alfonso Ortiz Tirado medal in 2013 (Sonora's highest cultural award), the Distinguished Sonoran Medal 2009, the Culturarte de Puerto Rico, the Opera de Valencia and the Plácido Domingo Zarzuela Awards in Operalia 2005 in Madrid's Teatro Real. He received the Eleanor McCollum 1st Prize Award, and Audience Choice Award with the Houston Grand Opera in 2003, among many others. Arturo is also the spokesperson for Beyond Celiac, an organization he proudly supports that works towards a cure for Celiac Disease. He currently lives in Miami with his wife and his son.

Performance Schedule

Stephanie Blythe in Concert

The Balboa Theatre

détour Series

Saturday October 23, 2021 7:30pm

Michelle Bradley in Concert

The Conrad Performing Arts Center, Baker Baum Recital Hall

détour Series

Saturday November 20, 2021 7:30pm

Sunday November 21, 2021 4:00pm

Arturo Chacón-Cruz in Concert

California Center for the Performing Arts, Escondido

détour Series

Friday December 3, 2021 7:30pm

Get Connected

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

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>

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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

Single tickets start at \$35 for Spring Concert Series.

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

San Diego Opera 2021-2022 Season

Stephanie Blythe in Concert

Saturday, October 23, 2021

<i>Michelle Bradley in Concert</i>	Saturday, November 20, 2021/Sunday, November 21, 2021	
<i>Arturo Chacón-Cruz in Concert</i>	Friday, December 3, 2021	
<i>Così fan tutte</i>	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	February 12, 15, 18, and 20(m), 2022
<i>Roméo et Juliette</i>	Charles Gounod	March 26, 29, April 1 and 3(m), 2022
<i>Aging Magician</i>	Paola Prestini	May 13 and 14 (evening and mat), 2022

Mission:

The mission of San Diego Opera is to deliver exceptional performances and exciting, accessible programs to diverse audiences, focusing on community partnerships, and the transformative and expressive power of the human voice.

Vision:

San Diego Opera will be recognized globally as a leading example of adaptability, innovation and sustainability, promoting diversity on stage, in our repertoire, and in our staff and leadership, with a commitment to world-class and emerging talent, and innovative use of technology.

Values:

- Through excellence in innovative programming and education and a commitment to equity, San Diego Opera provides a lasting cultural service to our diverse community.
- Our tradition of exceptional productions of grand opera is augmented with new expressions of opera in diverse settings.
- Our deep commitment to our community propels us to embrace inclusivity, accessibility and affordability.
- Through fiscal responsibility and nimble adaptation to changing environments, we ensure the future of San Diego Opera for our community.

www.sdopera.org

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