

SD OPERA Media Release

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Ástor Piazzolla’s Tango Opera, *Maria de Buenos Aires*, Continues San Diego Opera’s 2017-2018 Season as Part of the Company’s dētour Series

Mezzo-soprano Audrey Babcock makes Company debut as *Maria* and Choreographer John de los Santos makes Company directorial debut

Company to perform the first time at the Lyceum Theatre

Maria de Buenos Aires is presented as part of San Diego Symphony’s “It’s About Time” Festival

San Diego, CA – San Diego Opera’s 2017-2018 season continues on **Friday, January 26, 2018 at the Lyceum Theatre at 7 PM** with *Maria de Buenos Aires*, part of the Company’s dētour Series which is dedicated to exploring lesser known operas and works that fall outside of the Company’s ongoing tradition of presenting grand operas at the San Diego Civic Theatre. Additional performances are Saturday, January 27 (7 PM and 10 PM), and Sunday, January 28 (2 PM), 2018. The 7 PM performance on January 27, 2018 is sold-out.

Maria de Buenos Aires is by composer Ástor Piazzolla and librettist Horacio Ferrar and is a surreal exploration of independence, humanity and redemption. *Maria de Buenos Aires* tells the story of Maria, who was born “one day when god was drunk” in a poor suburb of Buenos Aires. She is seduced by the energy of the city and ultimately murdered. The second half of the opera follows Maria after her death, as she walks through purgatory, which is the city of Buenos Aires itself, and faces trials from a motley cast

of characters that ultimately lead to her salvation and redemption. Fusing opera with the passionate dance of tango, *Maria de Buenos Aires* has been dazzling audiences around the world.

Making her Company debut as Maria is American mezzo-soprano **Audrey Babcock**. American baritone **Paul La Rosa**, last seen as Enrique in 2015's *El Pasado Nunca Se Termina (The Past is Never Finished)*, returns to sing the role of El Payador (the Gaucho). They are joined by actor **Celeste Lanuza** who plays the role of El Duende (the Goblin). Rounding out the cast in Ensemble roles are mezzo-soprano **Laura Bueno**, soprano **Sarabeth Belon**, baritone **Bernardo Bermudez**, and bass **Walter DuMelle**. Stage director **John de los Santos**, who was last seen as the choreographer for 2016's *Great Scott*, bring his extensive knowledge of dance to the stage and conductor **Bruce Stasyna**, who last conducted *As One* earlier in the season, leads the orchestra for these performances.

The 10 PM performance on Saturday, January 27, 2018 is part of the **It's About Time Festival**, presented by the San Diego Symphony. This city-wide festival, curated by Steven Schick, explores how rhythm and percussion connects us to the world and to nature and invites us to listen to the sounds of the outside world, and our own heartbeats, to deepen connections among us all. San Diego Opera has joined the Symphony as well as Fresh Sound, red fish blue fish, Jazz at the Atheneum, Art Power, and others for this festival which runs January and February of 2018. For more information about **It's About Time** please visit <http://www.sandiegosymphony.org/itsabouttime/>.

This is a new production of *Maria de Buenos Aires*. **Liliana Duque Piñeiro** is the scenic designer, **Ingrid Helton** is the costume designer, and **Jason Bieber** is the lighting designer.

Maria de Buenos Aires will have a radio broadcast on Saturday, February 3, 2018 at 8 PM on KPBS radio, 89.5 FM (97.7 FM Calxico) 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

Audrey Babcock, Maria

San Diego Opera debut. American Mezzo-soprano Audrey Babcock is known for her portrayal of Carmen. In this role, she made her French debut with the Festival Lyrique-en-Mer and has performed the role with Florentine Opera, Nashville Opera, Florida Grand Opera, New York City Opera, San Antonio Opera, Knoxville Opera, Opera Delaware, Toledo Opera, Utah Festival Opera, and Anchorage Opera. Notable recent engagements include Rosette in *Manon* with The Dallas Opera, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with New Orleans Opera, Maddalena in *Rigoletto* with Palm Beach Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Omaha, Tulsa Opera, Florentine Opera and Nashville Opera, Erika in *Vanessa* for Sarasota Opera, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* for Tulsa Opera, Jo in *Little Women* with Utah Opera and Syracuse Opera, Second Lady in *The Magic Flute* with the Spoleto Festival, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* with Opera Idaho, Lola in *Cavalleria rusticana* with Utah Festival Opera and Washington Concert Opera, Flora in *La traviata* with Cincinnati Opera, and Carmen in *The Tragedy of Carmen* with Opera Delaware, Opera on the James, and Florida Grand Opera. Her symphonic concert and recital engagements have included Verdi's *Requiem* with Charleston Symphony and the West Virginia Symphony, Beethoven's *9th Symphony* with Eugene Symphony Orchestra, and Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica. Her musical theater works include Aldonza/Dulcinea in *Man of La Mancha* with Shreveport Opera, Lyric Opera of San Diego and Utah Festival Opera, Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* for Wolf Trap Opera and the music of Kurt Weill with the World Premier of *Lily; her life, his music* for Dicapo Opera, a one-woman fictional melodrama written and produced by Ms. Babcock.

Paul La Rosa, El Payador

American baritone Paul La Rosa's made his San Diego Opera debut as Enrique in 2015's *El Pasado Nunca Se Termina (The Past is Never Finished)* a role he also performed at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Houston Grand Opera. Other notable engagements include Cascada in *The Merry Widow* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette* with the Castleton Festival, Maximilian in *Candide* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra debut at the Tanglewood Festival and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Falke in *Die Fledermaus* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Jud Fry in *Oklahoma* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Jack Rance in *La fanciulla del West* at the Castleton Festival and with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia. Mr. La Rosa was a member of the Ryan Opera Center at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, where he appeared as Papageno in *The Magic Flute* and Hermann in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. During his time in Chicago he was also noted for his portrayals of Morales in *Carmen*, Kuligin in *Káta Kabanová*, and Cascada in *The Merry Widow*. As a member of the Juilliard Opera Center Mr. La Rosa appeared as the boxer Ochsenschwanz in *Schwergewicht oder die Ehre der Nation*, Ford in *Falstaff*, Rambo in *The Death of Klinghoffer* under the baton of the composer, and Raimbaud *Le Comte Ory*. He has been heard in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* at the Castleton Festival, in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* at Glimmerglass Opera, and as Dandini in *Cinderella* during a summer residency with the San Francisco Opera Merola Program.

Bernardo Bermudez, Ensemble

Venezuelan American baritone Bernardo Bermudez made his Company mainstage debut in 2016's *Madama Butterfly* as Prince Yamidori. Notable roles performed include Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Valentin in *Faust*, Belcore in *The Elixir of Love*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Vidal Hernando in *Luisa Fernanda*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, Schaunard in *La bohème*, Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Aeneas in *Dido & Aeneas*, Melchior in *Amahl and The Night Visitors*, Mercurio in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Teniente Cantalapiedra in *Cecilia Valdes*, Count Capulet in *Romeo et Juliette*, Dancairo in *Carmen*, Marullo in *Rigoletto*, and Morald in Richard Wagner's *Die Feen*. He recently performed the role of Diego Rivera in *Frida* at Long Beach Opera.

Walter DuMelle, Ensemble

American bass Walter DuMelle made his Company mainstage debut as Baron Douphol in 2017's *La traviata*. Recent local performances include King George III in *8 Songs for a Mad King* for the San Diego Fringe Festival, Sulpice in *The Daughter of the Regiment*, Dr. Bartolo and Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, The Sergeant of Police in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and the King in *Rumpelstiltskin* for Lyric Opera San Diego. With the La Jolla Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, he has sung the bass solos in their *Sing-Along Messiah* and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*. With Bach Collegium San Diego he was a soloist in Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*. He has performed frequently with Opera de Tijuana, singing such roles as Timur in *Turandot*, Friar Laurent *Roméo and Juliette*, Bartolo, Sacristano in *Tosca*, and The Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*. He has been a long time section leader with the St. James by-the-Sea Choir. In 2012 he co-founded with his wife Diana DuMelle Bodhi Tree Concerts, a performing arts non-profit, presenting concerts and donating profits to charitable organizations, with whom he's performed Pooh-Bah in *The Mikado*, Dick Deadeye *H.M.S. Pinafore*, Arac in *Princess Ida* and presented *Voices of the Spirit*, *Songs of Love*, *A Lenten Journey*, and *Best of Bodhi Tree*. Other recent engagements include the roles of the Boatman and Charles Redmond in Ion Theater's production of the San Diego premiere of Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George*, as well as his debut with CabaretCaccia singing the protest songs of Hans Eisler & Bertolt Brecht.

Laura Bueno, Ensemble

San Diego Opera debut. Notable appearances for American mezzo-soprano Laura Bueno include Sophie De Palma in *Master Class* with Ion Theatre, Betsy Bobbin in *The Tik Tok Man of Oz* for San Diego

Winkie Con, Tessa in *The Gondoliers*, Gigi in *Gigi*, Petra in *A Little Night Music*, Hope in *Anything Goes*, Iolanthe in *Iolanthe*, Peep Bo in *The Mikado* and Molly Brazen in *The Beggar's Opera* for Lyric Opera San Diego. Other credits include Wendy in *Peter Pan*, The Secretary in *The Consul*, Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, Zaneeta in *The Music Man*, Chava in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Margy in *State Fair* and Nanette in *No, No, Nanette*. She is also a core chorister with the San Diego Opera chorus. Laura has performed extensively with Bodhi Tree concerts and performed the role of Anna 1 in Kurt Weill's *The 7 Deadly Sins* at the 2014 San Diego Fringe Festival produced by Bodhi Tree. Laura has directed/choreographed several children's shows and show choirs. She has danced for 25 years and teaches dance, theater and music to children throughout San Diego County.

Sandra Camarena, Ensemble

Mezzo-soprano Sandra Camarena has been singing in the San Diego Opera as a core member of the chorus for the past twenty-five years, where she has performed in over sixty operas. She has also had small solo roles in San Diego Opera productions including *The Marriage of Figaro* (1998), in which she portrayed the Peasant Girl; *Turandot* (2003), in which she played the Handmaiden; and twice in *La bohème*, in which she was a milkmaid. She has further appeared in productions of the San Diego Lyric Opera as Lady Blanche, in *Princess Ida* (2004); Lady Tiang, in the *King and I* (2006); and as Kate, in *Pirates of Penzance* (2010). She began her opera studies under John Cottone and Dianna Ruggiero, and presently studies under Anishka Lee-Skorepa, M.A. of Music in Voice Performance.

Sarabeth Belon, Ensemble

San Diego Opera debut. Notable appearances by American soprano Sarabeth Belon include L'ecureuil and L'chat in *L'enfant et les sortilèges* with UCLA Opera and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* in UCLA's opera scenes showcase. This past summer, Sarabeth performed the role of Rebecca Nurse, from *The Crucible*, with the Miami Music Festival. Her most recent performance was in collaboration between The Industry and the LA Philharmonic in a piece called *Nimbus*.

Celeste Lanuza, El Duende

San Diego Opera debut. Actor Celeste Lanuza's notable engagements include *Guys and Dolls* at the Old Globe Theater, Anita in *West Side Story* at the Candlelight Pavilion Theater, Tiger Lily at the Moonlight Amphitheater in *Peter Pan*, *Evita* and *West Side Story* at Musical Theater West where she also played Anita for their Broadway in the Park Summer Series. Other credits include San Diego Repertory's *Zoot Suit* as the Lead Pachuca in the featured Pachuca Trio and Swing in the *Who's Tommy*. She is also an LA Music Awards Nominee for her original music. Lanuza's grateful to hold a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ballet Dance Performance with a minor in Musical Theatre Performance from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and Master of Fine Arts in Dance from the University of California, Irvine.

Bruce Stasyna, Conductor

Bruce Stasyna has been on the conducting rosters of the New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, and Sugar Creek Opera, and has held positions as Chorus Master for New York City Opera, Minnesota Opera, Wolf Trap Opera and Des Moines Opera. He was Artistic Director and Principal Conductor for the Green Mountain Opera Festival, and Head of Music and Director of the Young Artist Program at Palm Beach Opera. He has collaborated on many notable North American premieres including *Anna Nicole*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Orazi e Curiazi*, and *Joseph Merrick dit Elephant Man*. As a pianist he has concertized with such artists as Marcello Giordani, Deborah Voigt, J'nai Bridges, Irene Roberts, Marina Costa-Jackson, and Richard Troxell. The Canadian born conductor is currently the Chorus Master and Music Administrator for San Diego Opera and recently conducted *As One* for the Company. He is also the Chorus Master and Assistant Conductor for Washington Concert Opera, and Music Director of Vero Beach Opera.

John de los Santos, Director

Director/choreographer John de los Santos made his Company choreography debut in 2016 with *Great Scott*. He has staged a range of productions that include opera, musicals, plays, ballet, concerts, and workshop readings. His productions include the world premiere of *The Astronaut Love Show* at the Kraine Theater, *The Rose and the Knife* and *Le Comte Ory* for LoftOpera, *La Cage Aux Folles* for Skylight Music Theatre, *The Daughter of the Regiment* for Arizona Opera, *Carousel* for Ashlawn Opera, *María de Buenos Aires* for Lexington Philharmonic, and *Green Sneakers* for the Southside Theatre. He choreographed the world premiere of Jake Heggie and Terrence McNally's *Great Scott*, directed by Jack O'Brien, for The Dallas Opera. His choreography has also been seen at the Washington National Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Des Moines Metro Opera, Utah Festival Opera, and Austin Lyric Opera. As a librettist he worked with composer Clint Borzoni for *When Adonis Calls*, which was selected for inclusion in Fort Worth Opera's Frontiers showcase, and then performed in concert by operamission in New York. John's new collaboration with Borzoni, *The Copper Queen*, won the top prize Arizona Opera's commission program, Arizona SPARK. He was then commissioned by Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative to create a new original work with composer Christopher Weiss. The resulting piece, *Service Provider*, premiered at The Kennedy Center in 2015. In 2003, he became the resident choreographer for the Fort Worth Opera, where his choreography has been seen in *Rigoletto*, *Salome*, *La traviata*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and the world premieres of *Frau Margot* and *Before Night Falls*. John then made his directing debut with the company with a 2009 production of *Carmen*, followed by *The Mikado* and *The Pearl Fishers*. In 2010 he made his choreographic debut for The Dallas Opera with *Don Giovanni*. John has served on the directing faculty of the Seagle Music Colony in Schroon Lake, NY, where his productions have included *Anything Goes*, *Crazy for You*, *The Medium*, *The Fantasticks*, *The Mikado*, *La bohème*, *Guys & Dolls*, *Brigadoon* and *L'Italiana in Algeri*. John has also coached young artists with the Washington National Opera, Arizona Opera, Fort Worth Opera, and Des Moines Metro Opera, and served on the faculty of the KD Conservatory of Film and Dramatic Arts in Dallas.

Liliana Duque Piñero, Scenic Designer

Company debut. Notable work by Liana Duque Piñero include *Carousel* for Ash Lawn Opera, *Waiting for Godot* for Marin Theatre Company, *Eccentricities of a Nightingale* for Aurora Theatre Company, *The Flu Season*, *The Mandrake Root*, *The American Clock*, *As You Like It*, *Litter: the Story of Framingham*, *Dodecatuplets*, *Wild Kate: a Tale of Revenge at Sea*, *Riot*, and *Valley Girls* at A.C.T. American Conservatory Theatre, *Xerxes* for West Edge Opera, *The Elixir of Love*, *Sweeny Todd*, *Carmen*, and *Dido and Aeneas* for Teatro Nacional Sucre, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Don Pasquale*, *La Vie Parisienne* for Opera de Colombia, *Mud* and *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World* for Cutting Ball Theatre, *Hamlet* for Marin Academy, and *Ariodante*, *Life of Galileo*, and *Die Opernprobe/Die Kleine Harlekinade* for the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati.

Jason Bieber, Lighting Designer

American lighting designer Justin Bieber is the assistant lighting designer at San Diego Opera. He recently designed the USD productions of *Antigone*, *Fathers and Sons*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Marat/Sade*, and *Richard III*. His credits at The Old Globe include *The Mystery of Irma Vep* and *Since Africa*. His San Diego design credits include *Cowboy Versus Samurai* (2007 Patté Award), *Permanent Collection*, *Night Sky* (2008 Patté Award), *Good Boys*, *Yellowface*, *Stick Fly*, *Kita y Fernanda*, *Extraordinary Chambers*, and *The Amish Project* (Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company), *Topdog/Underdog*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Eurydice*, *Bluebonnet Court*, and *Bleeding Kansas* (MOXIE Theatre), *Facing East*, *No Exit*, *Scrooge in Rouge*, and *The New Century* (Diversionary Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Orphans*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *The Man Who*, *The Heidi Chronicles*, *The Seven Year Itch*, and *Into the Woods* (New Village Arts), *The Turn of the Screw*

(Intrepid Shakespeare Company), and *The Pajama Game*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Annie*, *High School Musical*, *Nine*, and *My Fair Lady* (Starlight Musical Theatre).

Performance Schedule

Friday	January 26, 2018	7 PM
Saturday	January 27, 2018	7 PM (sold-out) and 10 PM
Sunday	January 28, 2018	2 PM

Get Connected For *Maria de Buenos Aires*

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

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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 happen backstage and in the office on San Diego Opera's Instagram page. <http://instagram.com/sandiegoopera>

Purchasing Tickets

A subscription for the three dētour Series events starts at \$75,

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. Cast and repertoire subject to change.

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>Florenxia 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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