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Opera Colorado Opens Its 40th Anniversary Season with Verdi's *Rigoletto*

**Tickets are selling fast for this tale of revenge gone wrong featuring
some of opera's most well-known music**

**Performances run November 5-13 at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, including an abridged Student
Matinee on November 10**

Denver, CO (October 12, 2022)—Opera Colorado opens its 2022-23 Season with *Rigoletto*, Verdi's tale of curses, young love, and revenge. *Rigoletto* opens Saturday, November 5 at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, with additional performances on November 8, 11, and 13, along with a Student Matinee on November 10.

Rigoletto is an embittered jester whose only ray of light is his daughter, Gilda. He serves at the philandering Duke of Mantua's court and is notorious for viciously mocking those around him, especially those whose wives and daughters have fallen victim to the Duke. When the Duke's eye falls on Gilda, Rigoletto swears revenge—but at what cost?

"We are thrilled to open our 40th Anniversary Season with *Rigoletto*," says Greg Carpenter, The Ellie Caulkins General & Artistic Director. "This Verdi classic showcases everything Opera Colorado is known for: incredible singing, unforgettable music, and grand spectacle. Audiences will delight in irresistible melodies like 'La donna è mobile' and 'Caro nome,' and will be undoubtedly moved by one of opera's most heart-wrenching stories."

Hailed as the "voice we all hear in our heads as the 'ideal' Rigoletto" (*Parterre Box*), **baritone Stephen Powell** plays the title role. His daughter, Gilda, is played by **soprano Sharleen Joynt**, who "shimmers with an angelic quality that is simply heavenly" (*Schmopera*). Rounding out the leading roles is **tenor Joshua Dennis**, who was "so charming you almost forget he's despicable" (*MinnPost*) in his portrayal of the Duke at Minnesota Opera.

Mezzo-soprano Sandra Piques Eddy returns to play Maddalena, after appearing in Opera Colorado's *Falstaff* in 2018, and **bass Christian Zarembo** appears as Count Monterone and Sparafucile. Stephen Powell, Sharleen Joynt, Joshua Dennis, and Christian Zarembo are all making their Opera Colorado debuts.

On November 10 at 10:00 a.m., we present a **special, abridged performance for students** featuring the 2022-23 Artists in Residence in the leading roles alongside the Opera Colorado Chorus and Orchestra, followed by an interactive talk-back with the cast and crew. Teachers can contact

education@operacolorado.org or call 303.778.7350 to reserve Student Matinee tickets, which are \$12 per student and \$15 per adult chaperone. The *Rigoletto* Student Matinee is sponsored by the Genesee Mountain Foundation.

Patrons attending opening night can expand their experience with an additional ticket to our Opening Night Dinner, which includes a delectable three-course meal before the performance. Tickets can be purchased on operacolorado.org (tickets do not include the performance). The *Rigoletto* Opening Night Dinner is sponsored by Zach T. Smith.

Tickets for the full production, ranging from \$39-\$225, are available at operacolorado.org/rigoletto. For more information about current and future programming at Opera Colorado, contact Jennifer Colgan at jcolgan@operacolorado.org.

RIGOLETTO ve

November 5, 8, 11, 13

November 10 – Student Matinee

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

REVENGE IS A FOOL'S GAME

Verdi's Italian masterpiece opens Opera Colorado's 40th Anniversary Season, featuring unforgettable music, including the effervescent "La donna è mobile." The jaded jester Rigoletto serves the reckless Duke of Mantua and his hedonistic court. Little does Rigoletto know the womanizing duke has seduced his naive daughter, Gilda. How far will Rigoletto go to protect his only family?

Cast

Rigoletto | Stephen Powell
Gilda | Sharleen Joynt
The Duke of Mantua | Joshua Dennis
Sparafucile | Christian Zarembo
Maddalena | Sandra Piques Eddy
Opera Colorado Chorus
Opera Colorado Orchestra

Creative Team

Conductor | Ari Peltó
Chorus Master & Assistant Conductor | Sahar Nouri
Director | Christopher Mattaliano
Sets provided by the New Orleans Opera Association
Costumes provided by Sarasota Opera Association, Inc.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Stephen Powell (Rigoletto) enters his fourth decade as a leading baritone in opera companies and orchestras around the globe. Mr. Powell maintains a busy performance schedule with USA performances in San Diego, Detroit, New York, Boston, Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, St. Louis, Seattle, Cleveland, Nashville, Dallas, Kansas City, Atlanta, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Baltimore, Washington DC, Minneapolis, Miami, as well as international credits in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Belo Horizonte, Wexford, Amsterdam, Paris, Singapore, Zurich, London, Hong Kong, Montreal, Toronto, Rome, and Leipzig. He has been a member of the voice faculty at Mannes School of Music in The New School in New York City for the past six years, teaches privately out of his home outside of Philadelphia, and is a recurring guest instructor at the Potomac Vocal Institute in Washington, DC. In addition to Jonathan Leshnoff's *Symphony No. 3*, he appeared on two other new releases in 2020, including his first solo CD, *American Composers At Play* (Acis), and Odyssey Opera's world premiere recording of Norman Dello Joio's *The Trial at Rouen* (BMOPsound). Mr. Powell earned his Bachelor of Music degree in Theory and Composition (piano emphasis) from Northwestern University, his Master of Music and Certificate in Performance from DePaul University in Vocal Performance, and spent two years as a young artist in the Lyric Opera of Chicago's apprentice program. He is a member of NATS, AFTRA, AGMA and NARAS. Mr. Powell was born and raised in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and currently resides near his hometown in beautiful Chester County with his wife, soprano Barbara Shirvis, and their two sons, Benjamin and Zachary, both of whom are pursuing careers as singers and jazz musicians.



Sharleen Joynt (Gilda) has been praised for her “silvery, sparkling, substantial and resonant soprano” (*Die Deutsche Bühne*), her “scintillating high range, reminiscent of the most beautiful moments of Mady Mesplé” (*Opernwelt*), and “an artistic command that leaves the listener breathless” (*Deutschland Radio*). Recently, she performed in *Rigoletto* (Gilda) with the Florida Grand Opera in the spring of 2022 and reprised her role in Jonathan Dove's *Flight* (Controller) for Seattle Opera, which was filmed and released for streaming in April of 2021. Early in the 2019-20 season, she made a role and company debut in *Rigoletto* (Gilda) with Edmonton Opera. Prior engagements include Lembit Beecher's *Sky on Swings* (Winnie), a new opera about Alzheimer's starring Frederica von Stade with Opera Philadelphia, and *La Bohème* (Musetta) with Vancouver Opera and Pacific Opera Victoria. She also sang Glière's *Concerto for Coloratura, Op. 82* with the Guelph Symphony, performed as the soprano soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Charleston Symphony, and in *Candide* (Cunegonde) with the Ravinia Music Festival. She graduated from Mannes College of Music in New York with her master's in vocal performance and made her Carnegie Hall debut singing the soprano solo in Schubert's *Mass in G*. She has been a prizewinner in the Liederkrantz Foundation Competition, the George London Foundation Competition, the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, the Licia-Albanese Foundation Competition, the Canadian Music Competition's International Stepping Stone, and the Palm Beach Opera Vocal Competition.



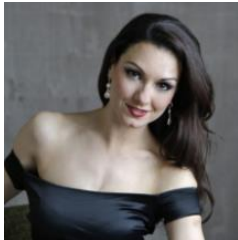
Known for his “robust tenor with baritone heft” (*Star Tribune*) and “vocally smooth and well-schooled performance” (*The Seattle Times*), American lyric tenor **Joshua Dennis (The Duke of Mantua)** is a star on the rise. In the 2021-22 Season, Mr. Dennis returned to Arizona Opera in the world premiere of Clint Borzoni and John de los Santos's *The Copper Queen* (Theodore Billings) and recently reprised his role in *Riders of the Purple Sage* (Bern Venters). Mr. Dennis is a champion of new works and had the honor of participating in world premieres, including *The Fix* (“Shoeless” Joe Jackson) with Minnesota Opera and Poul Ruders's *The Thirteenth Child* (Prince Frederic) with Santa Fe Opera. Additionally, he was heard in Huang Rou's *Paradise Interrupted* at the MGM Grand in Macau and as the host of Santa Fe Opera's virtual event *Songs from the Santa Fe Opera* in place of their opening night event. Additional highlights include *Roméo et Juliette* (Roméo) with Minnesota Opera and Utah Opera, Jake Heggie's *Moby Dick* (Greenhorn) also with Utah Opera, *La traviata* (Alfredo) with Opera Columbus and Opera Idaho, *Rigoletto* (Duke of Mantua) with Minnesota Opera and Dayton Opera, Beethoven's *Fidelio* (Jaquino) with Santa Fe Opera and the Houston Symphony, the title role in *Faust* with Opera San Antonio and Annapolis

Opera, *Così fan tutte* (Ferrando) with Charlottesville Opera and Opera Naples, and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Belmonte) with Kentucky Opera and New Orleans Opera.



French-American bass **Christian Zaremba (Count Monterone/Sparafucile)**, hailed for “stealing the evening” (*The Washington Post*) and being “ideally cast as the assassin Sparafucile, emerging from the shadows with his seething bass-baritone,” is equally at home under the lights of an operatic drama as on a concert stage. In the 2021-2022 season, Mr. Zaremba made his role debut in the title role of *Le nozze di Figaro* with Austin Opera and his company debut with L’Opéra de Montréal in *Die Zauberflöte* (Sarastro). In Europe, he sang Sarastro with the Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse and performed Verdi’s *Messa da Requiem* with the Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra. Other

previous engagements include an HD Broadcast of Sir David McVicar’s *Agrippina* (Lesbo) with the Metropolitan Opera; *La bohème* (Colline) with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Portland Opera and Opera Omaha; *Silent Night* (French General) at Austin Opera, *Les pêcheurs des perles* (Nourabad) at Lyric Opera of Kansas City; *Rigoletto* (Sparafucile) at Opera Theatre of St. Louis; *Aïda* (The King of Egypt) with the National Symphony Orchestra; *The Rape of Lucretia* (Collatinus), *L’Opera Seria* (Passagallo), and *Le nozze di Figaro* (Dr. Bartolo) with Wolf Trap Opera; *La fanciulla del West* (Sarastro and Ashby) with Minnesota Opera; and the bass soloist in staged productions of David Lang’s *The Little Match Girl Passion* with the Glimmerglass Festival and Portland Opera.



American mezzo-soprano **Sandra Piques Eddy (Maddalena)** is a former New England Regional Winner of the 2000 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions who made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 2001. Her roles there include *Le nozze di Figaro* (Cherubino), *Cavalleria rusticana* (Lola), *L’italiana in Algeri* (Zulma), *Manon* (Rosette), *Carmen* (Mercédès), *Sly* (Third Handmaiden), *Rigoletto* (Countess Ceprano), *Moses und Aron* (Third Naked Virgin), *Parsifal* (Flower Maiden), *L’Enfant et les sortilèges* (Dragonfly), and *The Merry Widow* (Olga). Her long association with The Met continued with more

recently roles, such as Nico Muhly’s *Two Boys* (Fiona), *Suor Angelica* (Novice and Abbess), *The Enchanted Island* (Sycorax, cover), *L’amour de Loin* (The Pilgrim, cover), *Così fan tutte* (Dorabella, cover), and *Rigoletto* (Maddalena, cover). Eddy returns to Opera Colorado after her role debut in *Falstaff* (Meg Page) in 2018. Other recent successes include role debuts such as, the title role in *Orfeo ed Euridice* at Portland Opera, *Madama Butterfly* (Suzuki) at Inland Northwest Opera, *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Paula) at Pittsburgh Opera, *Norma* (Adalgisa) at Boston Lyric Opera, and *Prince of Players* (Mistress Revels) at Florentine Opera.



Christopher Mattaliano (Director) has directed productions at the Metropolitan Opera of New York, New York City Opera, San Francisco Opera, Washington National Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Minnesota Opera, Dallas Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and Michigan Opera Theater, among many others. He has also worked internationally at L’Opéra de Nice, L’Opéra de Montreal, Spoleto’s Festival dei Due Mondi, Norwegian National Opera and New National Theatre of Japan.

A dual citizen of Italy and the United States, Mr. Mattaliano has enjoyed a long career in the U.S. as General Director at Portland Opera, Artistic Director at Pine Mountain Music Festival, and a member of Opera America’s Board of Directors for many years. He is a teacher of renown, with credits at Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, Yale University, Princeton University, the Metropolitan Opera Young Artist Development Program and Mannes College of Music.



Ari Pelto (Conductor) was appointed in 2015 as Opera Colorado's first-ever music director. His "breathtaking wizardry in the pit" (*The Denver Post*) has been widely celebrated, with Pelto in demand at opera houses and concert halls throughout the United States. At the age of 24, Pelto was appointed Assistant Conductor at the Spoleto Festival, and he has since gone on to conduct worldwide. International engagements include performances with Bochumer Philharmoniker and opera productions at New National Theatre of Tokyo and the Teatro Nacional Sucre in Quito, Ecuador. In 2004 he made his highly-praised debut with New York City

Opera, conducting *La Traviata*, after which he became a regular, returning for productions of *Madama Butterfly*, *La bohème*, and *Carmen*. Recent successes include performances of *The Nutcracker* with Atlanta Ballet and *The Flying Dutchman* with Utah Opera.



Sahar Nouri (Chorus Master & Assistant Conductor) serves as the company's chorus master, assistant conductor, and pianist coach. Ms. Nouri is the newly appointed music director of the Lamont Opera Theatre at Denver University. While being based in Denver, she continues to serve as guest coach/faculty with various organizations including San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Opera North Carolina, Opera Steamboat and more.

Previously, Ms. Nouri has been a member of the music staff at Houston Grand Opera, Dallas Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Utah Opera, Aspen Opera Center, Opera Parallèle, and Opera in the Heights. Her repertoire includes numerous classic operas as well as many world premieres such as: *Prince of Players* (Carlisle Floyd), *O Columbia!* (Gregory Spears), *Steal a Pencil for Me* (Gerald Cohen), and *Today It Rains* (Laura Kaminsky). A multi-lingual, Nouri has done studies in the Czech Republic, Italy, and Austria, and is frequently in demand as a language coach and recitalist.

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ABOUT OPERA COLORADO

Opera Colorado has served as a cornerstone of Denver's cultural community since 1983. In addition to its mainstage performances at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House each season, the company affirms its commitment to the future of the art form by annually presenting new works; with its nationally recognized Artist in Residence Program that trains the next generation of opera performers; and by each year reaching more than 45,000 students and adults through its many education and community engagement programs throughout the Rocky Mountain region. For more information, visit operacolorado.org.