

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Opera Colorado Presents Mozart's Masterpiece

Don Giovanni

This will be the first time the well-known opera has been performed at the Ellie in ten years

Denver, CO (October 11, 2023)—Opera Colorado presents Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, opening Saturday, November 4 at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, with additional performances on November 7, 10, and 12.

Don Giovanni, **one of Mozart's most celebrated operas**, tells the story of the legendary womanizer, Don Giovanni, who cares for nothing but fulfilling his own desires. Set against the backdrop of eighteenth-century Spain, the opera explores themes of seduction, power, and retribution. Audiences will be transported to a world of enchanting melodies and dramatic encounters as Don Giovanni's actions catch up with him, leading to one of opera's most dramatic climaxes. **Music Director Ari Pelto** will lead the Opera Colorado Orchestra in Mozart's masterful score.

"We are thrilled to share Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with Opera Colorado audiences for the first time in ten years," says the Ellie Caulkins General & Artistic Director Greg Carpenter. "The unique interplay of comedy and drama along with Mozart's incomparable music will make for an **unforgettable night of grand opera** and opening to our forty-first season."

In the title role, returning to Opera Colorado after appearing as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, is **baritone Bruno Taddia**. **Bass Joshua Bloom**, who the *New York Times* said, "lit up the stage whenever he was on it," appears as Don Giovanni's servant and sidekick Leporello. **Soprano Danielle Pastin**, "one of the most sheerly beautiful voices on the scene today" (*Opera News*), makes her Opera Colorado debut as Donna Anna and **soprano Ellie Dehn**, praised by critics as "a revelation" (*Chicago Sun-Times*), returns to Opera Colorado as Donna Elvira. Singing the role of Don Ottavio, Donna Anna's noble fiancé, is **tenor John Bellemer**, with a voice the *New York Times* calls "clarion toned." Rounding out the principal performers as the Commendatore is **bass Kevin Thompson**, making his Opera Colorado debut. **Kerby Baier and Turner Staton**, 2023-24 Artists in Residence, will portray Zerlina and Masetto.

Don Giovanni includes difficult themes, like intimate partner violence, that may be difficult for some audience members. We have **partnered with the Rose Andom Center** to provide resources in our lobby for patrons who are in need of support.

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 (Opening Night Dinner tickets do not include the performance).

Friday night, November 10, is **Masquerade Night!** We invite patrons to bring their own mask or decorate one in the lobby to feel part of the action during the first act's masquerade scene.

Tickets for the full production, ranging from \$39-\$235, are available at operacolorado.org. For more information about current and future programming at Opera Colorado, contact Jennifer Colgan at jcolgan@operacolorado.org.

DON GIOVANNI

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte
Premiered October 29, 1787, Estates Theatre

November 4, 7, 10, 12

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

NO BAD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED

Be seduced by Mozart's classic masterpiece, *Don Giovanni*, a tale about a serial womanizer who cares for nothing but fulfilling his own desires. This opera will sweep you away with its fine balance of comedy and tragedy, showing us the road to hell is paved with bad intentions. Will Don Giovanni stop playing fast and loose, or will he follow his passion to a fiery demise?

Cast

Don Giovanni | Bruno Taddia
Leporello | Joshua Bloom
Donna Anna | Danielle Pastin*
Donna Elvira | Ellie Dehn
Don Ottavio | Jon Bellemer*
Commendatore | Kevin Thompson*
Zerlina | Kerby Baier**
Masetto | Turner Staton**
Opera Colorado Chorus
Opera Colorado Orchestra

*Opera Colorado debut

**Opera Colorado 2023-24 Artist in Residence

Creative Team

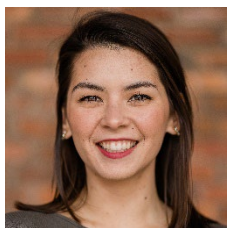
Conductor | Ari Pelto
Chorus Master & Assistant Conductor | Sahar Nouri
Director | David Lefkovich

*Sets designed by Lawrence Shafer, provided by the New Orleans Opera Association.
Costumes provided by Sarasota Opera Association, Inc.*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

For a complete list of biographies, visit operacolorado.org.

KERBY BAIER | Zerlina



Kerby originally hails from Atlanta, Georgia, and graduated from East Carolina University with her M.M. in Voice Performance and Pedagogy. Previously, she graduated from Furman University in South Carolina. This season with Opera Colorado, she sings in the touring productions of *The Elixir of Love* (Adina) and *Cinderella* (Tisbe). She has performed in *The Coronation of Poppea* (Poppea) and *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Blanche) with ECU Opera Theatre, and *Dido and Aeneas* (Belinda) with Furman Lyric Opera. Kerby is delighted to be joining the company and to trade her east coast views for the Colorado mountains!

JOHN BELLEMER | Don Ottavio



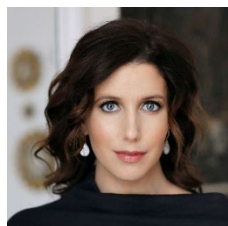
Possessed of a voice *The New York Times* calls “clarion-toned,” American tenor John Bellemer has gained a reputation for his strong portrayals in a wide range of repertoire. Bellemer has appeared in leading roles at opera houses across North America and Europe and was featured as Gounod’s *Faust* in the Academy Award-nominated film *Lincoln*. In the 2022-23 Season, Bellemer took the stage with On site Opera in *Kaiser von Atlantis* (Soldier) at Carnegie Hall. He also joined the Idaho Falls Symphony as the tenor soloist in a performance of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9. Recently, Bellemer made his role debut in *L’amico Fritz* (Fritz) with Teatro Grattacielo to great acclaim. Engagements in recent seasons include *Les pêcheurs de perles* (Nadir) with North Carolina Opera; *Rigoletto* (The Duke) with Michigan Opera Theater; Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Lysander) with Hawaii Opera Theatre; *The Turn of the Screw* (Peter Quint) in Beijing, China; and *The Flying Dutchman* (Steuermann) with Austin Opera. Bellemer began choral singing as a young child and continued throughout his school years, eventually choosing to study voice over medicine at James Madison University where he received his Bachelor of Music degree. He went on to complete his master’s degree in music at the University of Illinois. He lives in New York with his wife, Sarah Blaze, and their two Parson Russell Terriers.

JOSHUA BLOOM | Leporello



Australian-American bass Joshua Bloom is frequently praised for his “resplendent bass” and “huge vocal capacity” alongside an “outstanding dramatic precision and power” (*New York Times, Independent*) across a remarkable variety of repertoire from Mozart, Wagner, and Strauss, to world premiere works by Gerald Barry and Richard Ayres. He has sung principal roles with Oper Köln, English National Opera, Garsington Opera, the Royal Opera House, San Francisco Opera, Wiener Staatsoper, LA Opera, Opera Australia, New York’s Metropolitan Opera, Washington National Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Badisches Staatstheater, Irish National Opera, and New Israeli Opera, among others. In the 2022-23 Season, Bloom made multiple house debuts in *Semele* (Cadmus) for Opera de Lille, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Bottom) for Opéra de Rouen Normandie, and *Nixon in China* (Kissinger) for Opéra national de Paris. On the concert platform, he performed Handel’s *Messiah* with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and *The Death of Klinghoffer* (Rambo) at The Concertgebouw. Highlights from past seasons include *Die Vögel* (Ratefreund) and *Rusalka* (Vodnik) for Opera Köln, *Aida* (Ramfis and the King) for New Israeli Opera, and *Don Giovanni* (Leporello) for Welsh National Opera.

ELLIE DEHN | Donna Elvira



American soprano Ellie Dehn has been praised by critics as “a revelation” (*Chicago Sun-Times*), acclaimed for her “great stage presence and a voice combining metallic clarity and sensual richness” (*Wall Street Journal*). In the 2022-2023 Season, Ms. Dehn performed *Messiah* with the New Jersey Symphony, *Elijah* with the Florida Orchestra, and return to the Metropolitan Opera in *Falstaff* (Alice Ford, cover). In the 2021-2022 Season, she made her debut at Seiji Ozawa Music Academy in *Die Fledermaus* (Rosalinde) and returned to the Metropolitan Opera in *La bohème* (Musetta, cover) and *Le nozze di Figaro* (Countess). On the concert stage, she sang Britten’s

Spring Symphony with the Grant Park Music Festival. Pandemic highlights included *Albert Herring* (Lady Billows) in a filmed version with Minnesota Opera.

DAVID LEFKOWICH | Stage Director



David Lefkowich is an accomplished stage director and fight choreographer who has enjoyed success with different companies including the Metropolitan Opera, Teatre alla Scala, San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, Minnesota Opera, and Glimmerglass Opera. Recent directing engagements include a site-specific *Acis and Galatea* for Out of the Box Opera, an immersive *Pagliacci* at Boston Lyric Opera, a site-specific *Tosca* for Austin Opera, *Tosca* and *La Cenerentola* at Annapolis Opera, and *Pagliacci* at Opera Colorado. Also, *Don Giovanni* at L'Opéra de Montréal, *Don Giovanni*, *Idomeneo*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, and *L'Histoire du Soldat* at the Ravinia Music Festival with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Maestro James Conlon.

David made his European debut directing *Le portrait de Manon* at the Gran Teatre Liceu in Barcelona and followed with *The Rake's Progress* at La Monnaie in Brussels. David is a guest artist and performs master classes at several young artist programs and universities including the San Francisco Opera Center Adler Fellowship Program, Atelier Lyrique at L'Opéra de Montréal, Maryland Opera Studio, and Ithaca College. David is a graduate of Northwestern University with a Bachelor of Science in Theatre and has a certificate from École Jacques-Lecoq in Paris, France. David served as the Artistic Director of the Mill City Summer Opera in Minneapolis, Minnesota where he directed the annual summer offerings. Currently, he is the Artistic Director of Out of the Box Opera in Minneapolis, a company dedicated to creating high-quality operatic experiences in site-specific locations, most notably with *Diva Cage Match*, an epic battle of voices, egos, and talent in a boxing gym.

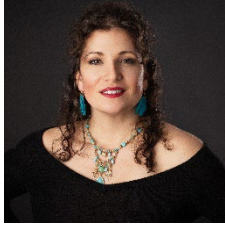
SAHAR NOURI | Chorus Master and Assistant Conductor



Iranian pianist and conductor Sahar Nouri returns to Opera Colorado for a sixth season, serving as the company's Chorus Master, Assistant Conductor, and Pianist Coach. Ms. Nouri is the Music Director of the Lamont Opera Theatre at the University of Denver. She is also the founder and director of Dandelion Opera Institute, a summer training program for young, talented opera singers, pianists, and conductors. While based in Denver, Ms. Nouri continues to serve as guest coach/faculty with various organizations, including San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Opera North Carolina, 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). Nouri has done studies in the Czech Republic, Italy, and Austria, and is frequently in demand as a language coach and recitalist.

DANIELLE PASTIN | Donna Anna



Quoted as having “a lovely demeanor and irresistible creamy timbre” by *Opera News*, American soprano Danielle Pastin is gaining accolades from opera houses around the country. In the 2021-22 Season, Pastin returned to Pittsburgh Opera in *Carmen* (Micaëla) and made her house and role debut in *Gianni Schicchi* (Nella) with Tulsa Opera. On the concert stage, she joined the Glacier Symphony for their Mozart and Mahler Spring Festival, with repertoire including Mozart’s *Requiem* and Mahler’s *Liebst du um Schönheit*. In the 2022-23 Season, she returned to her role in *Pagliacci* (Nedda). She made her mainstage Metropolitan Opera debut in *The Queen of Spades* (Masha/Chloë, cover) and has since been invited back to perform in *Pagliacci* (Nedda), a new production of Massenet’s *Manon* (Javotte), *Carmen* (Frasquita), a role she also performed in her debut with the Dallas Opera, and *Francesca da Rimini* (Samaritana, cover).

ARI PELTO | Opera Colorado Music Director and Conductor



Ari Pelto 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.

TURNER STATON | Masetto



Turner Staton (bass-baritone) is a native of Kansas City, Missouri. His degrees include an Artists Diploma from William Jewell College, a master’s from Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, and a bachelor’s from Pepperdine University. In 2022, Turner finished his tenure as an Apprentice Artist with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City where he performed in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *Steve Jobs*, *Tosca*, and was featured in the premiere of *Baseball: a Musical Love Letter*. In Opera Colorado’s 40th Anniversary Season, Turner appeared in the mainstage productions of *Rigoletto* (Ceprano, Monterrone cover) and *Turandot* (Timur, cover), and in the touring productions of *The Pirates of Penzance* (Pirate King) and *Romeo & Juliet* (Capulet/Tybalt). Additional performance credits include *Le nozze di Figaro* (Figaro), *Così fan tutte* (Don Alfonso), *La Calisto* (Mercurio), and Rossini’s *Petite messe solennelle*. Festivals include Opera Saratoga as a 2022 Festival Artist and Tanglewood Music Festival as a 2020 and 2021 Vocal Fellow. Turner is elated to be returning to Opera Colorado for his second season as a 2023-2024 Artist in Residence and will be featured in the mainstage productions of *Samson and Delilah* (Old Hebrew) and touring productions of *The Elixir of Love* (Dulcamara) and *Cinderella* (Alidoro/Don Magnifico).

BRUNO TADDIA | Don Giovanni



Bruno Taddia, born in Pavia, Italy, began his musical training with the violin. After his stage debut at the prestigious Rossini Opera Festival in *Il viaggio a Reims* (Don Alvaro) he began to collaborate with many of the top musical institutions in the world. Recently, he starred in *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Winterreise*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, *L’Elisir d’amore*, *Don Pasquale*, and made a role debut in *Falstaff*. He also sang *Gianni Schicchi* at the Puccini Festival in 2020; *The Barber of Seville* (Figaro) at Grand Théâtre de Genève; *Italiana in Algeri* (Taddeo) and *Der Vampyr* (Lord Ruthven) at Hungarian State Opera Budapest; *The Barber of Seville* (Figaro) and *La bohème* (Marcello) at Teatro La Fenice di Venezia; *Le gare generose* (Bastiano) at the Giovanni Paisiello Festival; and debuted the title role in *Don Pasquale* at Opéra Montpellier in 2019. He also appeared in the new recording of Vivaldi edition’s *Tamerlano* as Bajazet, under the baton of Ottavio Dantone. His

interpretations combine a wide range of characters in the baroque, classical, and contemporary operatic repertoire as well as in the symphonic and vocal chamber music.

KEVIN THOMPSON | Commendatore



Kevin Thompson, acclaimed by the *New York Times* as a “stentorian bass”, and he “possesses a voice with extraordinary range, depth, color combined with a commanding stage presence...a mountain of a voice, with resonance from the Escorial of Philip II to the throne of Boris Godunov, and the majestic court of Sarastro...” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*). His 2022-23 Season engagements included house debuts with Washington National Opera in *Elektra* (Der Pflieger des Orest and Ein Alter Diener) and in *Aida* (Il Re) with Fort Worth Opera. Mr. Thompson also returned to Opera Omaha for an Opera Outdoors concert, where he performed scenes as the title character from Boito’s *Mefistofele*, and to Roanoke Opera for their Opera Gems Gala Concert, and with Odyssey Opera for Rachmaninoff’s *Troika: Aleko* (Old Gypsy), *The Miserly Knight* (Ivan), and *Francesca di Rimini* (The Ghost of Virgil).

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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.