

For Immediate Release

THE
SANTA FE
OPERA



THE SANTA FE OPERA ANNOUNCES THE 2023 SEASON & REVEALS DETAILS OF ITS 19TH WORLD PREMIERE SLATED FOR 2024

22 June 2022

Contact: Emily Doyle Moore | media@santafeopera.org | 505-986-5908

Santa Fe, NM — Santa Fe Opera General Director **Robert K. Meya** announced today the repertory and casting for the company's 2023 Season and revealed its 19th world premiere slated for 2024. Opening the opera's 66th Festival Season will be Puccini's *Tosca* and Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*, followed by Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Dvořák's *Rusalka* and Monteverdi's *Orfeo* with a world premiere orchestration by American composer **Nico Muhly**. In 2024, the company has commissioned a new opera by two of America's most exciting talents, composer **Gregory Spears** and former US Poet Laureate and Pulitzer Prize-winner **Tracy K. Smith** titled *The Righteous*, which will explore the intersection between religious faith and political power. The piece marks the second operatic collaboration between Spears and Smith, whose *Castor and Patience* will receive its world premiere at **Cincinnati Opera** this July.

Speaking by video from **Stieren Orchestra Hall**, Meya expressed delight over the future season, stating, "We will bring five new productions to the stage, each carefully chosen. Monteverdi, Debussy and Dvořák are paired with audience favorites by Puccini and Wagner." Meya noted that the 2023 Season marks the 50th anniversary of the company's **Pueblo Opera Program**. Since 1973, children and families from New Mexico's 19 Pueblos and three reservations have come to the Santa Fe Opera to take part in a music program founded on the shared value and respect for the power of storytelling. The Pueblo Opera Program is guided by an advisory council that includes many past participants and Tribal Elders from around the state. To commemorate its 50th anniversary, Meya confirmed that the **Pueblo Opera Cultural Council** has engaged filmmaker **Beverly Singer** of **Santa Clara Pueblo** to create a documentary about this unique program.

Scheduled in the 66th Festival Season are 38 performances including two special Sunday evenings featuring the opera's singing and technical apprentices in staged **Apprentice Scenes** on **August 13** and **20**. The company holds to its mission and time-tested programming model: a balanced and varied repertory of new, lesser performed and standard works. Opening on **June 30** and **July 1, 2023** are two standard works, *Tosca* and *The Flying Dutchman*, followed by two lesser performed works, *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Rusalka*, on **July 15** and **22**. Rounding out the season and presented for the first time on **July 29** will be Monteverdi's seminal *Orfeo*. Leading performances of both *Orfeo* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Music Director **Harry Bicket** notes, "It's a serendipitous moment that SFO plans Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and Debussy's *Pelléas* in the same season because Debussy was trying to find a musical language that matched the natural speech rhythms of French in the same way that Monteverdi was trying to do for the Italian language a few

hundred years earlier. Both operas share dream-like atmospheres where there is no real time or place, but which are inhabited by real human beings suffering vividly real heartbreak.”

Tickets for the 2023 Season are on sale now at santafeopera.org.

TOSCA

Torture, murder and suicide...the clock ticks.

The Santa Fe Opera’s 66th Festival Season opens on June 30, 2023 with one of opera’s greatest works, Puccini’s **Tosca** in a new production directed by **Keith Warner** with scenery and costumes by **Ashley Martin-Davis** and lighting design from **Allen Hahn**. Seasoned operagoers and newcomers alike are drawn to *Tosca* for its theatricality fueled by love, jealousy and political intrigue as relevant today as when it premiered in 1900 at Rome’s Teatro Costanzi.

John Fiore leads an exciting cast beginning with sopranos **Angel Blue** and **Leah Hawkins** in the title role. Sharing the role of Cavaradossi are tenors **Joshua Guerrero** and **Freddie De Tommaso** in his much-anticipated American debut. Grammy and Emmy-winning baritone **Reginald Smith, Jr.** will make his company debut as the villainous Scarpia. Baritone **Blake Denson** sings Angelotti in his company debut. **Susanne Sheston** is the Chorus Master.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

Condemned and sailing the stormy seas.

Opening July 1, 2023 is a piece not heard on the Santa Fe Opera stage in over 30 years: Richard Wagner’s **The Flying Dutchman**. Stage Director **David Alden**, who has directed every other Wagner opera, is excited to give us this powerful new production set during the Industrial Revolution. **Paul Steinberg** provides the scenic design with costumes from **Constance Hoffman** and lighting by **Duane Schuler**. In this retelling, the legend of a ghost ship forever condemned to sail the seas takes on psychological depths. Will the characters find escape from torment and redemption through love?

Thomas Guggeis, the 29-year-old incoming Music Director of the **Frankfurt Opera**, conducts an all-star cast including former Apprentice singer **Nicholas Brownlee** in the role of the Dutchman, acclaimed soprano **Elza van den Heever** as Senta, bass **Morris Robinson** as Daland and former Apprentice singer **Richard Trey Smagur** in the role of Erik. Making his company debut as Steuermann is former Apprentice singer **Bille Bruley**. Susanne Sheston is the Chorus Master.

PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE

Despair and forbidden love.

Not seen on the Santa Fe Opera stage since 1977, Debussy’s masterpiece *Pelléas et Mélisande* is presented from July 15, 2023 in a riveting new site-specific production directed and designed by **Netia Jones**, who presented **A Midsummer Night’s Dream** in the 2021 Festival Season. With *Pelléas*, Debussy’s orchestra is a character of its own; one of the 20th-century’s most influential scores propelling a visceral drama that never fails to move.

Santa Fe Opera Music Director Harry Bicket conducts a cast headlined by two thrilling singers in their Santa Fe Opera debuts: baritone **Huw Montague Rendall** and mezzo-soprano **Samantha Hankey**. Also making company debuts are Korean baritone and 2021 Cardiff Singer of the World **Gihoon Kim** as Golaud and Estonian bass **Ain Anger** in the role of Arkel. Audience favorite and Grammy-winning mezzo-soprano **Susan Graham** returns to the Santa Fe Opera stage as Geneviève. Susanne Sheston is the Chorus Master.

RUSALKA

Will she become part of his world?

On July 22, 2023, **Sir David Pountney's** electrifying new production of *Rusalka* meets Dvořák's turn-of-the-century masterpiece at the potent intersection of timeless fairy tale and timely psychological drama.

Leslie Travers returns to Santa Fe to provide scenic designs while costume designer **Marie-Jeanne Lecca** and lighting designer **Malcolm Rippeth** make company debuts.

Dvořák began writing *Rusalka* late in his career when he had turned his attention almost exclusively to mythical themes. With echoes of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*, the opera weaves the tale of a water nymph who pays the highest price for the chance to love a human. Responding with sharply contrasting vocal styles and sound worlds for the opera's mortal and supernatural characters, Dvořák vividly portrays the impossibility of merging the two and the despair of the individual caught between them.

Led by conductor **Lidiya Yankovskaya** in her company debut, the company welcomes back soprano **Ailyn Pérez** to sing the title role. Tenor **Robert Watson** sings the role of the Prince and soprano **Mary Elizabeth Williams** is the Foreign Princess, both in their company debuts. Mezzo-soprano **Michaela Martens** is Ježibaba and bass **James Creswell** sings Vodník. Susanne Sheston is the Chorus Master.

ORFEO

Don't look back...

Rounding out the 2023 Festival Season on July 29, 2023 will be the world premiere of a new orchestration by **Nico Muhly** of one of opera's earliest written and regularly performed works, Monteverdi's seminal *Orfeo*. Says Muhly, "For me, the main challenge in re-orchestrating *Orfeo* is realizing the continuo parts; everything needs to be, note-for-note, the same as the original, but with a modern musician's sensibility about embellishment and ornament. Here, I'm trying to use color and timbre to achieve this, where the continuo has a more explicit relation to the plot: a sense of textural allure from the pit."

Adds Music Director Harry Bicket, who will conduct, "The first 20th-century revivals of this piece, which at the time had not been performed in 300 years, were all contemporary orchestrations of the score by composers such as d'Indy, Hindemith, Casella and Berio. The Santa Fe Opera is following that tradition by commissioning an unashamedly 21st-century look at a 17th-century opera seen through the prism of a young composer who includes among his influences the music of Byrd, Handel and Gibbons."

Mirroring this contemporary approach to the work, the direction is in the hands of **Yuval Sharon** in his company debut. He is joined by a remarkable team each also making Santa Fe Opera debuts:

Alex Schweder and **Matthew Johnson** give us the visual environment and **Yuki Nakase Link** and **Hana S. Kim** provide the lighting and projection designs.

One of the greatest exponents of the title role, superstar tenor **Rolando Villazón**, makes his company debut. Soprano **Lauren Snouffer** will come to Santa Fe for the first time to sing the roles of La musica and La speranza, mezzo-soprano and former Apprentice singer **Paula Murríhy** sings La messaggera, **James Creswell** is Caronte and baritone **Blake Denson** is Plutone. Susanne Sheston is the Chorus Master.

2023 Debuts

Ain Anger (Bass); **Bille Bruley+** (Tenor); **Blake Denson** (Baritone);
Alden Gatt (Conductor); **Thomas Guggeis** (Conductor); **Samantha Hankey** (Mezzo-soprano);
Leah Hawkins (Soprano); **Matthew Johnson** (Visual Environment); **Gihoon Kim** (Baritone);
Hana S. Kim (Projection Design); **Marie-Jeanne Lecca** (Costume Design);
Yuki Nakase Link (Lighting Design); **Nico Muhly** (Composer);
Sir David Pountney (Stage Director); **Huw Montague Rendall** (Baritone);
Malcolm Rippeth (Lighting Design); **Morris Robinson** (Bass); **Alex Schweder** (Visual Environment);
Yuval Sharon (Stage Director); **Reginald Smith, Jr.** (Baritone); **Lauren Snouffer** (Soprano);
Freddie De Tommaso (Tenor); **Rolando Villazón** (Tenor); **Keith Warner** (Stage Director);
Robert Watson (Tenor); **Mary Elizabeth Williams** (Soprano); **Lidiya Yankovskaya** (Conductor)

Returning Artists

With most recent or upcoming opera appearance

Singers

Angel Blue (*Angel Blue in Concert*, 2021); **Nicholas Brownlee+** (*Tristan und Isolde*, 2022);
James Creswell (*The Marriage of Figaro*, 2021); **Susan Graham** (*Die Fledermaus*, 2017);
Joshua Guerrero (*Madame Butterfly*, 2018); **Elza van den Heever** (*Alcina*, 2017);
Michaela Martens (*Salome*, 2015); **Paula Murríhy+** (*Die Fledermaus*, 2017);
Ailyn Pérez (*Roméo et Juliette*, 2016); **Richard Trey Smagur+** (*Jenůfa*, 2019)

Conductors

Harry Bicket (*Carmen*, 2022); **John Fiore** (*Angel Blue in Concert*, 2021)

Directors

David Alden (*Jenůfa*, 2019); **Netia Jones** (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2021)

Designers

Allen Hahn (*Mitridate*, 2001); **Constance Hoffman** (*Tales of Hoffman*, 2010);
Netia Jones (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2021); **Ashley Martin-Davis** (*Roméo et Juliette*, 2016);
Duane Schuler (*Carmen*, 2022); **Paul Steinberg** (*The Beggar's Opera*, 1992);
Leslie Travers (*Salome*, 2015); **D. M. Wood** (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2021)

Chorus Master

Susanne Sheston (2022 Season)

+Former Santa Fe Opera Apprentice

TOSCA

Music by Giacomo Puccini
Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa
Premiered 14 January 1900, Teatro Costanzi, Rome

A New Santa Fe Opera Production
11 Performances — June 30; July 5, 8, 14, 21; August 1, 7, 12, 19, 23 & 26, 2023
Sung in Italian with opera titles in English and Spanish

Creative Team

Conductor John Fiore
Stage Director Keith Warner*
Scenic & Costume Design Ashley Martin-Davis
Lighting Design Allen Hahn
Chorus Master Susanne Sheston

Cast

Tosca Angel Blue (June 30 - August 7)
Tosca Leah Hawkins* (August 12 - 26)
Cavaradossi Joshua Guerrero (June 30 - August 1)
Cavaradossi Freddie De Tommaso*~ (August 7 - 26)
Scarpia Reginald Smith, Jr.*
Angelotti Blake Denson*

The Santa Fe Opera Chorus & Orchestra

*Santa Fe Opera debut, +Former Santa Fe Opera Apprentice, ~U.S. Debut

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner
Premiered 2 January 1843, Königliches Hoftheater, Dresden

A New Santa Fe Opera Production
8 Performances — July 1, 7, 12, 31; August 5, 10, 15, 25, 2023
Sung in German with opera titles in English and Spanish

Production support generously provided by:
Wyncote Foundation, as recommended by Frederick R. Haas & Rafael Gomez

Creative Team

Conductor Thomas Guggeis*
Conductor Alden Gatt* (August 25)
Stage Director David Alden
Scenic Design Paul Steinberg
Costume Design Constance Hoffman
Lighting Design Duane Schuler
Choreographer Maxine Braham
Chorus Master Susanne Sheston

Cast

The Dutchman Nicholas Brownlee+
Senta Elza van den Heever
Daland Morris Robinson*
Erik Richard Trey Smagur+
Steuermann Bille Bruley*+

The Santa Fe Opera Chorus & Orchestra

*Santa Fe Opera debut, +Former Santa Fe Opera Apprentice

PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE

Music by Claude Debussy

Libretto by Maurice Maeterlinck

Premiered 30 April 1902, Salle Favart, Paris

A New Santa Fe Opera Production

6 Performances — July 15, 19, 28; August 3, 9, & 18, 2023

Sung in French with opera titles in English and Spanish

Creative Team

Conductor Harry Bicket

Stage Director Netia Jones

Scenic, Costume & Projections Design Netia Jones

Lighting Designer D. M. Wood

Chorus Master Susanne Sheston

Cast

Pelléas Huw Montague Rendall*

Mélisande Samantha Hankey*

Golaud Gihoon Kim*

Arkel Ain Anger*

Geneviève Susan Graham

The Santa Fe Opera Chorus & Orchestra

*Santa Fe Opera debut, +Former Santa Fe Opera Apprentice

RUSALKA

Music by Antonín Dvořák

Libretto by Jaroslav Kvapil

Premiered on 31 March 1901, Prague

A Company Premiere and New Santa Fe Opera Production

6 Performances — July 22, 26; August 4, 8, 17 & 22, 2023

Sung in Czech with opera titles in English and Spanish

Production support generously provided by:

Robert & Ellen Vladem

Creative Team

Conductor Lidiya Yankovskaya*

Stage Director Sir David Pountney*

Scenic Design Leslie Travers

Costume Design Marie-Jeanne Lecca*

Lighting Design Malcolm Rippeth*

Chorus Master Susanne Sheston

Cast

Rusalka Ailyn Pérez

The Prince Robert Watson*

Vodník James Creswell

Ježibaba Michaela Martens

The Foreign Princess Mary Elizabeth Williams*

The Santa Fe Opera Chorus & Orchestra

*Santa Fe Opera debut, +Former Santa Fe Opera Apprentice

ORFEO

Music by Claudio Monteverdi
World Premiere Orchestration by Nico Muhly*
Libretto by Alessandro Striggio the Younger
Premiered 24 February 1607, Carnival of Mantua

A Company Premiere and New Santa Fe Opera Production
5 Performances — July 29; August 2, 11, 16 & 24, 2023
Sung in Italian with opera titles in English and Spanish

Commissioning support provided by:
Sarah Billingham Solomon

Creative Team

Conductor Harry Bicket

Stage Director Yuval Sharon*

Visual Environment Alex Schweder* & Matthew Johnson*

Lighting Design Yuki Nakase Link*

Projection Design Hana S. Kim*

Chorus Master Susanne Sheston

Cast

Orfeo Rolando Villazón*

La musica/La speranza Lauren Snouffer*

La messaggera Paula Murrihy+

Caronte James Creswell

Plutone Blake Denson

The Santa Fe Opera Chorus & Orchestra

*Santa Fe Opera debut, +Former Santa Fe Opera Apprentice

About The Santa Fe Opera

The Santa Fe Opera annually draws 85,000 people from New Mexico and around the globe. Nestled atop a mountain vista in northern New Mexico, the company's iconic Crosby Theatre is open on three sides, allowing visitors to enjoy performances complemented by the elements. Since 1957 the company has presented over 2,000 performances of 177 operas by 90 composers spanning five centuries of opera, creating a legacy of 45 American premieres and 17 world premieres.

The mission of the Santa Fe Opera is to advance the operatic art form by presenting ensemble performances of the highest quality in a unique setting with a varied repertory of new, rarely performed and standard works; to ensure the excellence of opera's future through apprentice programs for singers, technicians and arts administrators; and to foster an understanding and appreciation of opera among a diverse public.

Discover More: [santafeopera.org](https://www.santafeopera.org)

Connect: [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Podcasts](#) | [TikTok](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#)

###