

# Orlando Sings Goes to the Opera

SYMPHONIC CHORUS  
HARMONIA  
SOLARIA PLAYERS

NOVEMBER 15 | 8 PM

THE HARRIET COLEMAN CENTER  
FOR PERFORMING ARTS



## A LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of Orlando Sings,

Welcome to the Concerts at the Coleman Series in our new venue, the Harriett Coleman Center for the Arts! It is such a thrill to bring the magic of choral music to life with our vibrant community of singers, and to see Orlando Sings audiences coming together again to experience this ancient and deeply human art form. I am especially excited for those who are new to professional choral concerts, who will feel the powerful spirit and energy that fills the room when we're enveloped in music, voices, and poetry.



Tonight, we are thrilled to begin this journey with a concert dedicated to opera choruses—a genre where choral voices take center stage as “the voice of the people.” In opera, the chorus reflects the thoughts, hopes, and struggles of society, embodying the resilience, joy, and pain of the human experience. Each chorus tells a part of the larger story of humanity—our collective joys and sorrows, our fears and resilience, and our unending hope for a better world.

When we sing together, we are united, each voice lending strength to the other—a powerful reminder of our shared humanity and the impact we can have when we come together.

I am grateful to each of you for being part of the Orlando Sings community. Your presence here tonight helps us create a space where music not only entertains but also fosters reflection, connection, and compassion. As you listen, may you find inspiration in the stories these choruses tell, and may their music remind us of the beauty and resilience within us all.

Thank you for being here and supporting the arts in our community. Orlando Sings is possible because of your support. Please help us continue to share the gift of music by purchasing tickets, bringing your friends, following us on social media, subscribing to our email list, and donate what you can. Together, we create music that transforms lives, builds cultural bridges, and strengthens our community.

Missed out on the early bird season subscription pricing? Good news! We are pleased to offer attendees of tonight's concert a 10% discount for all remaining concerts. Visit [orlandosings.org/boxoffice](http://orlandosings.org/boxoffice) and enter discount code **RESOUNDVIP**.

With gratitude,

Andrew Minear, D.M.A.

Artistic and Executive Director

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We are so grateful for your support.

## SYMPHONIC CHORUS

### **SOPRANOS**

Emily Beavers  
Joan Bissell  
Katelyn Bocarro  
Mary Katherine Boring  
Pamela Carlson  
Leslie Gallagher  
Ryleigh Gruber  
Brittany Gress  
Holly Hodges  
Madison Hubbart  
Lauren Jewell  
Ling Jin  
Irene Kaplan  
Rachel LaQuea  
McKay Medders  
Mariana Murillo  
Grace Olsen  
Angelina Pastore  
Sandra Peter  
Renee Davis  
Annemarie Rizzolo  
Sara Stumpf  
Jana Vlaanderen  
Madison Whelan

### **ALTOS**

Indhira Acosta  
Kimberly Aspiazu  
Ali Bernards  
Nyasha Brice  
Hillary Brown  
Jennifer Carneiro  
Brittany Carroll  
Ashleigh Ciambriello White  
Rebekah Ciolek  
Mary Beth Constant  
Dorea Cook  
Katie Counts  
Lexis Fortner  
Melinda Fradley  
Emily Fratti  
Taylor Gelb  
Oliver Green  
Grace Hayes  
Cristina Jimenez  
Heather Klayman  
Lexi Lederman

Sydney Leduc  
Danielle Lindner  
Kristen Machuga  
Emmy Marrero  
Jamielee Page  
Ashley Rogers  
Solangi Santiago  
Miranda Schubert  
Lindsay Taylor Stough  
Michelle Toro  
Mara Torres

### **TENORS**

Adam Barnes  
Alexander Bilka  
Richard Bissell  
Andy Blanchard  
Paul Braithwood  
Nate Caldwell  
Jevon Clarke  
Richard Connor-Villa  
Nathan De Oliveira  
Joshua Dykes  
Andrew T Francis  
Wes Hartman  
Daniel Hill  
Andrew Khan  
Alexander Knapp  
Brian Knollman  
Jason Lederman  
Kelvin Nguyen  
Zachary Pecore  
Ezra Prather  
Ralph J Pugh  
Jeremy Roldan  
Lawrence Rooney  
Chris Salina  
Wesley Schafer  
Eli Valentin  
Reiner Wolf

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Parker Amesbury  
Matthew Astone  
Shane Bass  
Joe Bellino  
Matthew Bluem  
Ian Chan  
Chris Farwell

Alex Glover  
Lane Hollingsworth  
Cameron Ivie  
Malcolm Katzen  
Jerrett King  
Ryan Knight  
Julian Lopez Suarez  
Justin McGill  
Matthew Minear  
Chase Moore  
Ryan Murray  
Jon Olson  
Kevin Osano  
Alex Pollard  
Robert Rijos Jr.  
Aaron Rowe  
Nathan Selikoff  
James Thompson  
Kevin Thompson  
John Valencia-Londono  
Nathan West

## HARMONIA

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Kristen Bays  
Judeine Binns  
Ramnie Cabrera  
Cyvi-Lauren Cerbas  
Cyvi-Nairene Cerbas  
Louise Cooper  
Katie Counts  
Mary Crisman  
Kate Duffy  
Sarah Furtado-Jackson  
Leslie Gallagher  
Michela Gerratana  
Erin Gersbach  
Charlotte Harrington  
Ling Jin  
Emily Jones  
Ashley Lee  
Christina Machado  
Kristen Machuga  
McKay Medders  
Mariana Murillo  
Grace Olsen  
Patricia Osborn  
Angelina Pastore  
Sandra Peter  
Shirley Piercy  
Annemarie Rizzolo  
Cecilia Skrocki  
Elise Smith  
Sara Stumpf  
Yamilet Trujillo  
Jana Vlaanderen  
Madison Whelan  
Caitlyn Wissner  
Carmen Yanez

### **ALTOS**

Joyce Ackey  
Meredith Ayson  
Maggie Bailey  
Lee Berman  
Ali Bernards  
Danielle Birket  
Elizabeth Blakley  
Nyasha Brice  
Jennifer Carneiro  
Beka Ciolek  
Vanessa Davis  
Meghan Duhon  
Adriana DuPont  
Sylvia Duryea  
Kaylee Faulkner  
Cameron Frye  
Nicole Funk  
Lanie Gillespie  
Jovianie Gimbernard  
Mars Green  
Maria Guerrero  
Brandy Hooper  
Madison Hubbart  
Heidi Inder  
Cristina Jimenez  
Heather Klayman  
Sydney Leduc  
Cara Lee  
Ginna Leftwich  
Kara Lockcuff  
Chiara Marcario  
Emylette Marrero  
Hannah Miller  
Cheri Morris  
Gabrielle Peterson  
Ashley Rogers  
Carolyn Rosenblum  
Jasmin Ruiz  
Meagan Ryan  
Ashley Saunders  
Lindsay Stough  
Michelle Toro  
Mara Torres  
Lisa Trotzke-Laws  
Brooke Van de Houten  
Crystal Vessels  
Flannery Wiest  
Veronica Yanes-Nadal

# ORLANDO SINGS GOES TO THE OPERA!

A story of humanity's struggles, passions, and dreams...

## ORLANDO SINGS SYMPHONIC CHORUS

Andrew Minear, conductor

### HARMONIA

Sandra Shafer, conductor

Ledean Williams, piano

## PROGRAM

### ACT 1: SETTING OUT

Voyagers' Chorus from *Idomeneo* Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Francesca Coverini, soprano

Bridal Chorus from *Lohengrin* Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

Chorus of Wedding Guests from *Lucia di Lammermoor* Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)

Pedro Valdez, tenor

### ACT 2: LONGING AND DESIRE

Habanera from *Carmen* Georges Bizet (1838–1875)

Hillary Brown, mezzo-soprano

Anvil Chorus from *Il Trovatore* Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

Bell Chorus from *Pagliacci* Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857–1919)

### ACT 3: SHADOW AND STRUGGLE

Cauldron Dance from *Macbeth* Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

[ sung by Harmonia ]  
Cecilia Skrocki, soprano

Eri tu che macchiavi from *Un Ballo in Maschera* Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

Thandolwethu Mamba, baritone

Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves from *Nabucco* Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

## ACT 4: BEAUTY AMIDST LOSS

Humming Chorus from *Madama Butterfly*

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)

Dido's Lament/With Drooping Wings  
from *Dido and Aeneas*

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

Dorea Cook, mezzo-soprano

Dôme épais (The Flower Duet) from *Lakmé*

Léo Delibes (1836–1891)

[ sung by Harmonia ]

Summertime from *Porgy and Bess*

George Gershwin (1898–1937)

[ sung by Harmonia ]

Katie Counts, soprano

## ACT 5: RESILIENCE AND HOPE

Procession of the Nobles  
from *Mlada*

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)

You'll Never Walk Alone from *Carousel*

Richard Rodgers (1902–1979)  
Oscar Hammerstein (1895–1960)

Erika Vasallo, mezzo-soprano

Sunday  
from *Sunday in the Park with George*

Stephen Sondheim (1930–2021)

## COMBINED CHOIRS

Somewhere from *West Side Story*

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

## NARRATIVE & PROGRAM NOTES

### ACT 1: SETTING OUT

1. Voyagers' Chorus from *Idomeneo* – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

#### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

Our journey begins with a group of travelers venturing forth, symbolizing humankind's endless search for new horizons, dreams, and a better future. They leave behind familiar shores, inspired by the promise of discovery, love, and growth.

#### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

In this powerful scene from *Idomeneo*, Mozart's opera set in ancient Crete, sailors pray for safety at sea as they journey under the watch of the gods. This chorus captures their reverence and vulnerability, setting a tone of devotion and tension as they face the whims of nature and fate.

## 2. Bridal Chorus from *Lohengrin* – Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

The travelers celebrate a union, a joining of hearts that symbolizes hope and trust in the future. They imagine a world made whole by love, sharing this moment of joy and beauty in anticipation of what lies ahead.

### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

Known to many as the “Here Comes the Bride” march, this chorus celebrates the wedding of Elsa and Lohengrin with joy. Yet, Wagner weaves subtle tension into the moment, as Elsa’s trust will soon be tested by doubt. This piece offers a glimpse of happiness that foreshadows the opera’s coming turmoil.

## ACT 2: LONGING AND DESIRE

### 4. Habanera from *Carmen* – Georges Bizet (1838–1875)

### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

As love ignites, it also reveals its dangers—obsession, jealousy, and the heart’s capricious nature. Here, passion sparks the complexities of human relationships, where love’s intensity is matched only by its unpredictability.

### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

As Carmen sings of love’s fickle nature, the chorus gathers around her, drawn by her charm and magnetism. This iconic moment introduces Carmen as a free spirit who defies societal constraints, setting the stage for the passion and intensity that will drive her story to its fatal end.

### 5. Anvil Chorus from *Il Trovatore* – Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

The sound of iron striking iron calls forth a sense of strength and resilience. It is a reminder of both the grit needed to shape a life of meaning and the toil that often accompanies our deepest desires.

### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

The Anvil Chorus is one of the most iconic moments in *Il Trovatore*. Set against the clanking anvils of dawn, the Spanish gypsies sing of their freedom and camaraderie. This vibrant and energetic chorus celebrates their resilient spirit, embodying the themes of pride and defiance that run through the opera.

### 6. Bell Chorus from *Pagliacci* – Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857–1919)

### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

A moment of communal joy rings out as bells call the villagers together, celebrating life’s small, collective moments. Yet, there’s a lingering awareness that joy may be fleeting.

### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

The Bell Chorus heralds a moment of community and joy in *Pagliacci*, as villagers gather in anticipation of a traveling troupe’s performance. This peaceful interlude is a sharp contrast to the tragedy about to unfold, as the opera delves into themes of jealousy, betrayal, and heartbreak.

## ACT 3: SHADOW AND STRUGGLE

### 7. Cauldron Dance from *Macbeth* – Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) [sung by Harmonia]

#### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

Darkness stirs as supernatural forces begin to twist the narrative. This is a world where fate and ambition mix with betrayal, and where the very foundations of trust and loyalty begin to unravel.

#### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

In Verdi's *Macbeth*, the supernatural elements of Shakespeare's play come to life as the witches gather for a ritual around the cauldron. Their incantations summon dark forces that foreshadow Macbeth's tragic downfall. This eerie chorus adds a layer of foreboding and fate to the concert's exploration of the human psyche.

### 8. Eri tu che macchiavi from *Un Ballo in Maschera* – Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

#### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

Personal betrayal surfaces, showing how quickly love can turn to anger, bitterness, and grief. A lone voice carries the weight of heartbreak and the realization that trust has been shattered.

#### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

This dramatic aria reveals Renato's anguish and fury after discovering his wife's betrayal. Filled with heartbreak and bitterness, this piece intensifies the opera's exploration of trust, forgiveness, and inner conflict, allowing us a window into Renato's emotional turmoil and desire for justice.

### 9. Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves from *Nabucco* – Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

#### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

Now comes a collective cry of oppression and longing for freedom. The chorus captures the deep sorrow of those bound by forces beyond their control, yearning for a return to a home that now feels impossibly distant.

#### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

The famous *Va, pensiero* chorus is sung by Hebrew slaves longing for freedom and their homeland. This anthem of resilience, hope, and shared memory became a symbol of resistance and liberation for oppressed peoples. Its universal call for freedom makes it one of opera's most moving and timeless choruses.

## ACT 4: BEAUTY AMIDST LOSS

### 10. Humming Chorus from *Madama Butterfly* – Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)

#### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

In the silence following conflict, peace seems to settle briefly, as if holding its breath. This quiet moment offers solace, a time for reflection in which hope and despair coexist in uneasy balance.

#### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

The Humming Chorus provides a moment of tender anticipation as characters await dawn. In *Madama Butterfly*, this scene reflects Butterfly's patience and hope for her lover's return. The gentle, wordless humming creates an atmosphere of suspended time, underscoring her profound emotional journey.

### 11. Dido's Lament/With Drooping Wings from *Dido and Aeneas* – Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

#### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

The full tragedy of loss is realized here, as a soul prepares to part from life itself. This moment of profound sorrow honors the inevitability of endings and the fragility of our dreams.

#### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

This deeply moving lament is sung as Dido, Queen of Carthage, prepares to die after being abandoned by Aeneas. The chorus, With Drooping Wings, is a sorrowful farewell by Dido's attendants, capturing the beauty and sadness of her tragic end. Together, these pieces evoke love's loss and the inevitability of fate.

### 12. Dôme épais (The Flower Duet) from *Lakm  * – L  o Delib  s (1836–1891) [sung by Harmonia]

#### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

A duet celebrates the delicate beauty of nature and friendship. The sweet harmony of this song contrasts with the darker moments, showing that joy and beauty can persist, even in the shadows of loss.

#### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

This beloved duet from *Lakm  * evokes a moment of peace as Lakm   and her servant Mallika sing of nature's beauty. Set in colonial India, this scene contrasts with the opera's cultural tensions, creating an oasis of tranquility within a dramatic storyline. Its soothing harmony has made it a timeless favorite.

13. Summertime from *Porgy and Bess* – George Gershwin (1898–1937)  
[sung by Harmonia]

**TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE**

A song of lullaby-like simplicity reassures us of life's gentle rhythms, suggesting that there is calm amidst chaos. The promise of warmth and renewal flickers, even in turbulent times.

**ORIGINAL CONTEXT**

Opening Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, this lullaby paints a warm, comforting image of a better life, contrasting with the hardships of Catfish Row. Clara's gentle melody conveys hope amid struggle, setting the tone for the opera's exploration of resilience and the longing for a brighter future.

**ACT 5: RESILIENCE AND HOPE**

14. Procession of the Nobles from *Mlada* – Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)

**TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE**

This triumphant moment recalls the pride and dignity with which we move forward, despite hardship. It is a show of strength, a powerful affirmation that life continues, and that honor and courage endure.

**ORIGINAL CONTEXT**

Though not featuring vocals, the majestic *Procession of the Nobles* from *Mlada* brings a regal presence to the concert. This orchestral piece celebrates nobility and honor, adding grandeur to the evening's themes of strength and human resilience.

15. You'll Never Walk Alone from *Carousel* – Rodgers (1902–1979) and Hammerstein (1895–1960)

**TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE**

Together, the journeymen find comfort in unity, singing of resilience through uncertainty. This song speaks to the strength we draw from one another and the assurance that, even in life's darkest hours, we are not alone.

**ORIGINAL CONTEXT**

An anthem of resilience and comfort, “You'll Never Walk Alone” reassures listeners that they are not alone, even in the darkest times. This powerful choral piece invites us to embrace courage and solidarity, embodying the theme of collective strength in adversity.

16. Sunday from *Sunday in the Park with George* – Stephen Sondheim (1930–2021) [Combined Choirs]

**TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE**

A moment of reflective beauty follows, as we contemplate life's intricate weave of love, loss, and art. This is a celebration of human connection and creativity, elevating everyday moments into something transcendent.

**ORIGINAL CONTEXT**

In *Sunday in the Park with George*, this chorus captures a moment of unity as characters are brought together to form a painting. “Sunday” celebrates harmony and stillness amid life's complexities, reminding us of art's power to create beauty and connection out of chaos.

## 17. Somewhere from West Side Story – Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

### TONIGHT'S NARRATIVE

Our journey concludes with a song of yearning. The promise of “somewhere” lingers—a place of peace and freedom that, though not yet in reach, remains in sight. It is a hopeful ending but also a reminder of the work still ahead, the world yet to be built. The music fades, leaving us with the vision of a better day—a promise yet unfulfilled, but one we will continue to believe will be one day.

### ORIGINAL CONTEXT

In this bittersweet duet, Tony and Maria long for a place of peace beyond the prejudice and violence that divide them. “Somewhere” embodies the yearning for a better world and offers a hopeful yet uncertain vision of love and unity amidst societal discord.



## BIOGRAPHIES



**Hillary Brown** is an alumna of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana (MM Vocal Performance, magna cum laude) and Stetson University (BM Vocal Performance, magna cum laude). Her study of opera and voice, along with a flair for bringing distinctive characters to life, has resulted in being cast in a wide variety of dramatic and quirky roles. Ms. Brown also performed the role of Isabella in the world premiere revised edition of *La Hija de Rappaccini* by Daniel Catán. Ms. Brown is an inaugural member of Orlando Sings Symphonic Chorus and its chamber choir, Solaria Singers, and is also a member of the Festival Singers of Florida under the direction of Dr. Kevin Fenton. Since returning to Florida in 2015, Ms. Brown has held adjunct voice faculty positions at Dr. Phillips High School and Edgewater High School in Orlando.

**Dorea Cook** is known for her clear, vibrant sound, and flexibility within diverse styles from solo operatic roles to oratorio, chamber, and contemporary repertoire. Recent performances include solos with the Solaria Singers, recently voted Orlando's best Chamber Music Group (*Orlando Weekly*), the Orlando Sings Symphonic Chorus, and the alto solos in Haydn's Lord Nelson Mass with the UCF Combined Choirs and Orchestra. Other recent performances include the title role in Massenet's Cendrillon with Valdosta State University Opera, staged excerpts from *Der Rosenkavalier* (Strauss), Southeastern premieres of music by John Moody, Emma Lou Diemer, Stefania De Kenessey, and more, and chamber music by Bellini, Mahler, Brahms, and Ravel. Dorea's current research focuses on twenty-first century North American art songs by women composers. She has presented her findings at a number of conferences. Dorea was awarded a NATS Emerging Leaders award in 2022.



Hailed as a “fearless performer” with a “charming and animated” presence, soprano **Francesca Coverini** is an up-and-coming face in the world of music. She found her love for performing at a young age, appearing in local musicals, plays and concerts around her hometown of Naples, Florida. She received her Bachelor’s in Vocal Performance from the Boston Conservatory before going on to pursue her Master’s at the Peabody Institute under the tutelage of world-renowned opera star, Elizabeth Futral. As a versatile performer, Francesca has taken the stage as an assortment of characters from the most endearing ingénues to the wittiest schemers. Her most recent roles include Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), Nora (*Riders to the Sea*), Die Erste Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Suor Dolcina (*Suor Angelica*). This year she joins the Opera Orlando for a season of “Destiny + Desire,” being featured in their mainstage productions of *Macbeth*, *Four Lost Santas/ Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and *Cendrillon*.

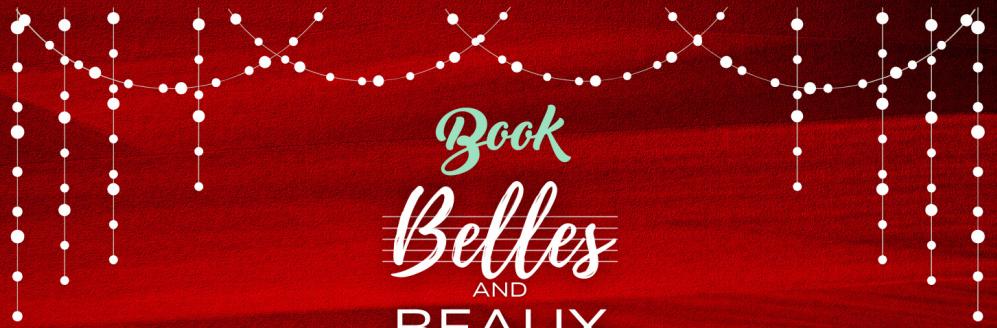
Eswatini-born Southern African baritone **Thandolwethu Mamba** has been described as having a “chilling refinement in bearing and voice.” Recent engagements include his Metropolitan Opera debut in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, Il Dancaïro in *Carmen* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Frost Opera Theater, Baron Duophol in *La Traviata* with Opera Wilmington, Town Magistrate in *Signor Deluso* and Max in *Stone Soup* with Florida Grand Opera. His creation of the role of Don Calogero Sedàra in *The Leopard* by Michael Dellarria has been released on Naxos Records. Mr. Mamba is a recent double graduate of the University of Miami and Duke University.



Tenor **Pedro Valdez** holds degrees from Texas State University and The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and is gaining attention for his effortless lyrical range. Last summer, he was a young artist with Finger Lakes Opera singing scenes from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Rigoletto*, and *La Traviata*. Mr. Valdez sang the role of Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with the Northern Lights Music Festival Apprentice Program. He has also been a member of Madison Opera's studio program where he sang Don Cruzio in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, Tenor in the trio from Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*, Brother in Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins*, and 2nd Nazarene in Strauss's *Salome*. Other roles include Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Alberto in *La Curandera*, and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*.

**Erika Vasallo** is a Cuban-American mezzo-soprano born and raised in Miami, Florida. She has worked with local companies in South Florida including the New Presbyterian Church Concert Series and the Civic Chorale of Greater Miami singing the alto solos in Handel's *Messiah*, as well as performing in concerts and operas with Magic City Opera and Orchestra Miami. Last season, she was a Handorf Company Artist with Opera Memphis, where she performed the role of Julia Child in *Bon Appétit!* and the role of Toledo in *The Falling and the Rising*. Prior to that, Ms. Vasallo was a Tomita Young Artist with Finger Lakes Opera and has sung notable roles with Taconic Opera. Other credits include singing the roles of Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, La Zia Principessa and La Frugola in *Suor Angelica* and *Il tabarro*, Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*, Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, the title role in *Luisa Fernanda*, and The Sorceress in *Dido and Aeneas*.





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