

TULSA OPERA
Presents

The Italian Girl

by Gioachino Rossini



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*Tulsa Opera's 75th season continues at the
Tulsa Performing Arts Center!*

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Aida in Concert

Saturday, February 25, 2023 - 7:30PM

The grandest of grand operas, Giuseppe Verdi's classic tragedy is performed in concert. Daniela Candillari, newly appointed Principal Conductor at Opera Theatre of St. Louis, makes her Tulsa Opera debut leading a cast of stars, large orchestra, and chorus of eighty. Tulsa Opera's Director of Outreach, Dani Keil, will bring the concert staging to life.

The 75th-anniversary gala concert will feature Metropolitan Opera star Michelle Bradley in the title role, tenor Limmie Pulliam as Radamès, Tulsa Opera favorite Morris Robinson, last seen in Tulsa Opera's baseball *Rigoletto*, as Ramfis, and three-time Grammy Award-winning mezzo soprano Michelle De Young as Amneris.



Into the Woods

Friday, May 12, 2023 - 7:30pm

Sunday, May 14, 2023 - 2:30pm

Stephen Sondheim's timeless musical interweaves beloved fairy tales and explores the consequences of its characters' wishes. The Tulsa Opera premiere features a cast of stars including Ann Toomey as the Witch, Curt Olds as the Baker, local Tulsa favorites Jana McIntyre as Cinderella and Mary Ann Stewart as the Baker's Wife, Filstrup Resident Artist Sam Briggs as Jack, and former Tulsa Youth Opera student Meghan Linnington as Little Red Ridinghood.



"...delightful, big and lovable and accessible and loaded with some of Stephen Sondheim's most gorgeous and endearing songs." —Deadline.com

The Italian Girl

originally titled *L'italiana in Algeri* or *The Italian Girl in Algiers*
composition by Gioachino Rossini, libretto by Angelo Anelli
sung in Italian with English supertitles
run time: 140 minutes including one 20-minute intermission

CAST & CREATIVES

Isabella	Allegra De Vita
Lindoro	Aaron Crouch*
Mustafa	Ashraf Sewailam
Taddeo	Robert Mellon*
Elvira	Abigail Raiford*^
Zulma	Elissa Pfaender*^
Ali	V. Savoy McIlwain*^
Conductor	Leslie Dunner*
Director	Kimille Howard*
Scenic Designer	Michael Schweikardt
Costume Designer	Howard Tsvi Kaplan
Properties Artisan	Bryan Johnson
Lighting Designer	Deanna Byford*
Hair & Makeup Designer	Amanda Clark*
Production Stage Manager	Zach Jenkins
Chorus Director, Principal Pianist	Lyndon Meyer
Assistant Director	Stephanie Smith*
Supertitle Caller	Maddie Breedlove^
Supertitle Translation and Preparation	Aaron Beck

*Indicates Tulsa Opera debut ^Indicates member of the Tulsa Opera Filstrup Resident Artist Program

TULSA OPERA CHORUS

Daniel Agee
Andrew Barker
Kyle Bloomer
Todd Cochran
Mark Freudenheim
Celyn Grigson
Gered High
Christopher Jenkins
Hayden Turner
Conor Yob
Robert Young

SUPERNUMARIES

Tom Clark
Brad Colvard
MaKayla Baxter
Brinney Mahmood
Sydney May
Eileen Schaumleffle

TULSA OPERA ORCHESTRA

Violin 1
Gina Davis, Concertmaster
Paulo Eskitch, Assoc. Concertmaster
Patti Gaddis
Greg Lynch
Jennifer Sherman
Corbin Bodley
Ashley Cooper
Alex O'Boyle-Ince

Violin 2
Sheri Scales-Neubauer, Principal
Elena Gavrilov, Assoc. Principal
Martha Mattes
Dina Litvinova
Nicholas Bashforth
Rachel Hay

Viola
Phil Wachowski, Principal
Missy Townsend, Assoc. Principal
Jeff Smith
Ronnamarie Jensen

Cello
Krassimira Figg, Principal
Phil Ince, Assoc. Principal
Kathy Rad
Erica Parker

Bass
Marc Facci, Principal
Chad Johnson, Assoc. Principal

Flute
Dana Higbee, Principal
Juliana Overmier

Oboe
Lise Glaser, Principal
Lisa Wagner

Clarinet
David Carter, Principal
Angela Carter

Bassoon
Richard Ramey, Principal
Charlotte Couch

Horn
Derek Matthesen, Principal
Josh East

Trumpet
Tim McFadden, Principal
Steve Haefner

Trombone
Paul Compton, Principal

Timpani
Steve Craft, Principal

Percussion
Roy Smith, Principal

Harpsichord Continuo
Lyndon Meyer

The Tulsa Opera Orchestra operates under an agreement with the American Federation of Musicians Local 94.
Stage and Wardrobe labor provided under agreement with IATSE local 354 and IATSE local 904.

Scenery and Costumes designed and built for Sarasota Opera Association.

Hotel accommodations for this production are generously provided by the Candlewood Suites.

Harpsichord generously provided by the Church of Saint Mary, Tulsa.

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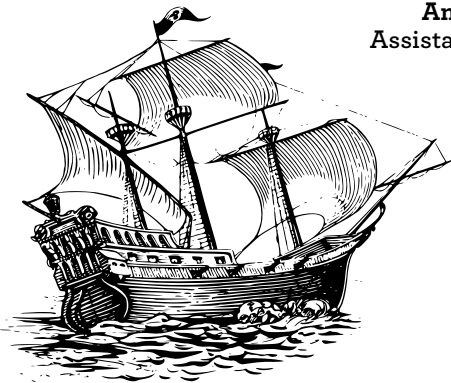
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The Italian Girl

Setting: The past. The palace of the Bey of Algiers. The seashore.

ACT I

Elvira, accompanied by her servant Zulma, laments the loss of her husband's love, the Turkish Bey Mustafà. Mustafà mistreats and rejects his wife in front of the harem, and his mother chastises him. Left alone with Ali, Captain of the guard, Mustafà reveals his plan to marry Elvira off to Lindoro, his Italian slave. The Bey is bored with his harem and desires someone new, so he commands Ali to find him an Italian girl. Lindoro, an enslaved Italian who has been captured for three months, longs for his true love, Isabella. Mustafà catches him daydreaming and reveals the plan to have Elvira married off to Lindoro. The enthusiastic Bey describes the attractions of the match, while Lindoro struggles to refuse.

An Italian ship has wrecked on the shores of Algeria in a storm, and Ali and his pirates claim its contents. Its passengers include Isabella, in search of Lindoro, and Taddeo, her travelling companion and would-be lover. Isabella is awash in sorrow but confident she can master the situation. Ali and his men take them prisoner, delighted to learn Isabella is Italian. Isabella cleverly passes off Taddeo as her uncle but becomes irritated by Taddeo's jealousy. They ultimately resolve to join forces.

Back in the palace, Lindoro and Elvira do not wish to marry, but Mustafà offers Lindoro freedom and passage on a ship to Italy if he takes Elvira. Lindoro agrees, admitting a vague possibility of marrying her in Italy. Ali enters with news of the arrival of the Italian beauty, and Mustafà is elated.

Surrounded by his court, Mustafà receives Isabella. While he is enchanted and immediately in love, she is horrified and amused by his appearance. As Mustafà attempts to woo Isabella, Lindoro, Elvira, and Zulma arrive to say farewell before boarding the ship to Italy. Lindoro and Isabella, astonished, notice one another and attempt to mask their feelings when they come face-to-face. Recovering herself, Isabella asks about Elvira, learning she is Mustafà's wife, who is being sent away to marry Lindoro. Isabella demands that Mustafà keep his wife and bequeath Lindoro to her, telling Mustafà that he does not know how to love. Mustafà capitulates to Isabella's insistence, and the act ends in confusion.



ACT II

Mustafà is so struck by lust; his unusual behavior is causing the court to fall into disarray. Mustafà commands Elvira and Zulma to summon Isabella to have coffee with him.

Lindoro and Isabella, finally alone, decide to escape together. Meanwhile, Mustafà in order to create favor with Isabella's "uncle" Taddeo has him appointed as "Lord Kaimakan." Terrified of the Bey, Taddeo reluctantly agrees to intercede on Mustafà's behalf.

Isabella, dressed in Turkish style, receives Mustafà's message, and cunningly invites Elvira to join them. Mustafà, Taddeo, and Lindoro each arrive to visit Isabella while she dresses and decide to conceal themselves to observe her. Later, in hopes of being alone with Isabella during coffee, Mustafà tells Taddeo his signal to leave will be a sneeze. Isabella greets Mustafà warmly and he sneezes, but Taddeo ignores the signal. Coffee arrives just in time to save Taddeo from the furious Bey. However, to Mustafà's horror and amazement, Isabella invites Elvira to join them.

Ali takes a moment alone to reflect on the nature of Italian women. Unaware of Lindoro's true identity, Taddeo reveals that he is not Isabella's uncle but her lover. When an enraged Mustafà arrives, Lindoro and Taddeo calm him by concocting a story that Isabella will declare him her adored pappataci, an obedient man unable to resist the opposite sex. This, Lindoro explains, is an Italian custom and great honor, as the pappataci enjoy a life of eating, drinking, and sleeping.

Isabella addresses the Italian captives who will play pappataci in the invented ceremony to help with her plot to lead them all to freedom. The ceremony begins and Mustafà, delighted with his new honor, swears an oath of eating, drinking, and keeping silent. While performing his pappataci duty with a table full of Italian food, his oath is tested under provocation by Isabella and Lindoro.

A European ship lies alongside the palace, and it's time to escape! Taddeo finally realizes who Lindoro is but decides to go along with them anyway. Elvira, Zulma and Haly find the Bey still acting as a mad pappataci. Suddenly recovering his sanity, Mustafà calls his guard, but they are all drunk. The Italians bid farewell, and Mustafà reunites with Elvira begging for forgiveness.



AARON BECK
Tulsa Opera Artistic Director

Aaron Beck joined the team at Tulsa Opera, the twelfth-oldest opera company in the United States, in 2010, and was appointed Artistic Director in 2022. As Artistic Director, Beck oversees the extensive artistic programs of the company, which include three annual mainstage productions, the Filstrup

Resident Artist Program, the Tulsa Opera Orchestra, the Tulsa Opera Chorus, Tulsa Opera Signature Chorale, and Tulsa Youth Opera, and collaborates on dozens of annual outreach performances. As a native of southwest Missouri and an adopted Tulsan, Beck affirms a revitalized commitment to both local and international artists, bringing the best of both worlds together in Tulsa's premiere performing arts organization. The son of music teachers, Beck feels a strong commitment to the education of those students who will create the future of music. Under his leadership, Tulsa Opera's education programs have grown to reach thousands of students and teachers annually across Oklahoma and the surrounding region. Beck is Music Director of Tulsa Youth Opera, Tulsa Opera's prestigious vocal music training program for students in grades 3-12. Over forty Tulsa-area students receive free training through this program. Under Beck's baton, Tulsa Youth Opera students have presented productions ranging from Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* to Dean Burry's *The Hobbit* to the upcoming United States premiere of Pierangelo Valtinoni's *Alice in Wonderland* in June 2023. Additionally, in 2017-2018, Beck spearheaded the development of Tulsa Opera's Raise Your Voice program (now the Raise Your Voice Tour), bringing vocal music to disadvantaged schools throughout Oklahoma. Beck received his Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from the Manhattan School of Music (with additional studies at the Eastman School of Music) and a Master of Music in Opera Coaching from Florida State University. As a pianist and music director, he has performed across the country, and is in demand as a vocal coach to opera and musical theatre singers. He lives in northeast Oklahoma with his wife and two children.



KEN MCCONNELL
Tulsa Opera General Director

Ken McConnell joined Tulsa Opera in 2014 after seeing the company's production of *Carmen*. Everything drew him into the world of opera, and he's been devoted to it ever since. Prior to his current position, Mr. McConnell served as Tulsa Opera's Chief Administrative Officer, managing a multimillion-dollar budget, a staff of ten, plus the scores of

people needed to bring an opera to life. During Mr. McConnell's tenure at Tulsa Opera, the company has presented over 35 productions including mainstage operas, Tulsa Youth Operas, and Resident Artist presentations. Mr. McConnell is most proud of producing the first ever "Baseball" *Rigoletto* in the United States at ONEOK field.



KIMILLE HOWARD
Director

Kimille Howard is a New York based director, deviser, writer, and filmmaker. Currently, she leads as the appointed Artistic Director of the Lucille Lortel Theatre's NYC Public High School

Playwriting Fellowship, a co-founder of the Black Classical Music Archive, and the new co-captain of Programming and Production for The Fled Collective. Kimille was awarded Best Director at the 2016 Thespis Festival for *It's All About Lorrie* by Joseph Krawczyk (Hudson Theater) which received a commercial run at The American Theater of Actors in 2017. She is a current member of The New Georges' Jam, a participant in New York Stage and Film's inaugural NYSAF NEXUS project, and a former Resident Director at the Flea Theater. She was the series producer for American Opera Project's first season of *Music as the Message*. She first joined the Metropolitan Opera in 2019 as the Assistant Stage Director in the "Splendid" (*New York Times*), and "Exhilarating" (*Washington Post*) new James Robinson production of *Porgy and Bess*. She also made her Broadway debut as Assistant Director on the 2019 Tony Award winning musical *Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations*. This season, her opera engagements include a return to the Metropolitan Opera as Assistant Stage Director for *Porgy and Bess* and *Tosca*. In addition, she will direct productions of William Grant Still's *Highway 1, USA* for Indiana University, the World Premiere of Errollyn Wallen's *Quamino's Map* commissioned by Chicago Opera Theater, Carlos Simon's *Night Trip* for Opera NexGen, will reprise *The Passion of Mary Cardwell Dawson* for the Glimmerglass Festival, and will direct a workshop of a new modern opera called *Echoes of the Great Migration* by Vince Di Mura for Catapult Opera Company. Theatre engagements include *B.R.O.K.E.N Code B.I.R.D Switching* for the Berkshire Theatre Group as well as readings of *Ghost Story* for New Jersey Repertory Theatre, *Pelican Bar* for The Gural Theatre produced by Theatre Now, and a concert presentation of select excerpts from *Making Mischeaux*, a new musical produced by Prospect Theater Company at 59E59. She will also direct an 8-part film series adapting BIPOC classic pieces for New Camerata Opera called *Refractions*. Next season, engagements include directing the new musical *Honey and Leon* for Theatre Row, *The Passion of Mary Cardwell Dawson* for Washington National Opera, *On the Town* for Montclair University, as well as a return to the Metropolitan Opera for their new productions of Terence Blanchard's *Champion* and *Die Zauberflöte*. Recent operatic engagements have included *L'Amant Anonyme* for Wolf Trap Opera, *Death By Life: A Virtual Opera* for White Snake Projects, and *The Passion of Mary Cardwell Dawson*, a new play with music, celebrating the founder of the historic and groundbreaking National Negro Opera Company with original music composed by Carlos Simon for the Glimmerglass Opera.



LESLIE DUNNER
Conductor

Rated #1 by the *Chicago Sun-Times* for "Chicago's best classical music/opera moments of 2013," Leslie B. Dunner's 2014-15 season included the South Shore Opera Company's fall production of Verdi's *La Traviata*. Their 2013 performance of Still's opera *Troubled Island* was described as "the most history-making event of the

year." This season, Dunner returned to conduct South Africa's annual "Starlight Pop Opera" concert with the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic. He returns to conduct Opera Ebony's fall production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* in New York City, and debuts with Milwaukee's Starlight Music Theatre for 43 performances of The Royal Shakespeare Company's version of Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*. Notable recent seasons included the Opera/Ballet Gala performance of *Carmen* in Guadalajara, Mexico during the Opening Ceremonies for the 2011 International Pan American Games and Opera Africa's 2007 production of

Mziliazi Khumalo's opera *Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu* at Den Norske Opera in Oslo, Norway. Early in 2014, Dunner conducted the American Opera Project's world premiere of Nkeiru Okoye's opera *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed that Line to Freedom* in New York City. He also returned to the Orlando Philharmonic, conducting their spring 2014 Super Series Program, *Music of the Ballet*. In 2015 Dunner returned to the Orlando Philharmonic to close their subscription season. Dunner has conducted Dance Theatre of Harlem's international tours to Austria's Salzburg Festival, Denmark's Tivoli Festival, the former Soviet Union, and the troupe's historic 1992 tour to South Africa, performing for Nelson Mandela. Their 1988 tours to London and across the UK included a gala performance for Diana, Princess of Wales as well as performances at the Kremlin in Moscow and the Kirov Theater in Leningrad in the former USSR. Dr. Dunner's guest conducting includes appearances in Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, Russia, Estonia, South Africa, Italy, and Spain. Ballet engagements include ABT, the New York City, Washington, Orlando and Madison Ballets, London's Royal Ballet and the Birmingham Royal Ballet, Michigan Opera Theatre, and the South African Ballet Theatre. He's received the "Distinguished Achievement" and "James Weldon Johnson" awards from the NAACP, the "Distinguished Young Alumnus Award" from CCMU Cincinnati, and the "Charles Stone Award" from the National Association of Negro Musicians. Dunner was co-winner of the Colorado Philharmonic Conducting Competition, and the 1st American prize-winner in the Toscanini Int'l Conducting Competition. He was also a participant in the "Leonard Bernstein American Conductors' Program." His large-scale work, *The Whirligigs of Time: Twelfth Night Suite* for mezzo-soprano, chorus and orchestra was premiered by the Prince George's Philharmonic in March 2006. His *Motherless Child Songs* recorded by the Minnesota Composers Forum, is available on the Innova label. His recording *Magical, Mystical Mouse* with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra (music from animated films), is available on the Pro Arte label. His live-recording performance of Alvin Singleton's *BluesKonzert* with pianist Ursula Oppens and the DSO, released to critical acclaim on the album *Ellington and the Great Masters*, is available on the Chandos label. His two most recent recordings with the Center for Black Music Research, *The African Diaspora: Five Movements in Color* by Mary Watkins, and the groundbreaking *Symphony in E minor* and *Piano Concerto in One Movement* by Florence Price are available from Albany records. In 2014 Maestro Dunner joined the Board of Chicago's South Shore Opera Company where he also serves as their Music Director.



LYNDON MEYER
Chorus Director, Principal Pianist

Lyndon Meyer has served as Chorus Director, assistant conductor, principal pianist, and vocal coach for the Tulsa Opera since 2014. As a vocal coach, he has held positions at the University of Oklahoma, Michigan State University, and

the Eastern School of Music, as well as at the Florida Grand Opera. In February 2019, he made his professional conducting debut for Heartland Opera's production of *La bohème*. In the world of musical theatre, he has directed numerous productions around the country, and serves as staff accompanist for the annual Lotte Lenya competition. Mr. Meyer also appears as a recitalist and chamber musician throughout the

region. In Tulsa, Mr. Meyer holds the post of Director of Music at the Church of Saint Mary (Tulsa) and appears as a guest choral conductor and clinician, in addition to maintaining an active coaching studio. He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas (BM) and the Eastman School (MM).



ALLEGRA DE VITA, ISABELLA

Allegra De Vita, hailed by *Opera News* as a "complex mezzo, [whose] fine-spun vibrato, was lovely in itself, but it also consistently conveyed human utterance." She was last seen gracing the Tulsa Opera stage as Maddalena in a video streaming of *Rigoletto*. Recently, she was seen as Angelina in *La Cenerentola* at Dayton Opera, the Page in *Salome* at The Spoleto Festival, and the title role in *Carmen* with

the Fort Wayne Philharmonic. Ms. De Vita spent three summers at the Glimmerglass Festival performing the roles of Pippo in *La Gazza Ladra*, Fulvio in *Cato in Utica*, and Arsamenes in *Xerxes*. She covered the role of Nursing Sister in *Suor Angelica* with the Metropolitan Opera. As a 2018 graduate from the Washington National Opera's Cafritz Young Artist Program, Ms. De Vita was seen in numerous productions, including Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* (Emerging Artist Performance), Tebaldo in *Don Carlo*, and Ruggiero in *Alcina* (Emerging Artist Performance). Ms. De Vita was a 2015 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Grand Finalist and can be heard on the Grammy Award winning CD of *Wozzeck* conducted by Hans Graf with the Houston Symphony. She was a resident artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts. Ms. De Vita holds a master's degree in voice from Rice University.



AARON CROUCH, LINDORO

An artist and activist, African American tenor, Aaron Crouch has been described by the *Huffington Post* as "riveting vocally and as an actor." Originally from Bowie, Maryland, he is a graduate of the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, studying under the guidance of Mikael Eliassen and Jonathan Beyer. During his time at the Curtis Institute of Music, Mr. Crouch performed several

notable roles such as Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Lensky in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Prunier in Puccini's *La rondine*, and Anthony in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*. In past summers, Mr. Crouch attended Houston Grand Opera's Young Artist Vocal Academy as well as the Glimmerglass Festival's Young Artist Program where he sang The Son in *Blue* & Tamino in *The Magic Flute*. In 2019, he received an Emerging Artist Award from the Opera Index Vocal Competition and most recently was awarded a Career Development Grant from the Sullivan Foundation.



ASHRAF SEWAILAM, MUSTAFÀ

The *New York Times* hailed Ashraf Sewailam's debut at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall as a "stand out performance" and *Opera News* described his voice as "purring and velvety with an easily produced Ramfis-like top range with a majestic tone," and his stage presence as "strong, mysterious and with mesmerizing intensity." Engagements in 2020 were to include both *Carmen* and

Les Contes d'Hoffmann at the Metropolitan Opera as well as Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola* with Minnesota Opera, and Ramfis in *Aida* with Virginia Opera. This coming season he will make his mainstage Metropolitan Opera debut in *The Magic Flute* as well as join their production of *Ariadne auf Naxos*. In addition, he will join Opera Steamboat as Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Dr. P in *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* as well as reprise the role of Colline in *La bohème* with Seattle Opera. In his debut with New Zealand Opera as the assassin Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, he was described as “hard to better, both vocally and dramatically.” He subsequently returned to sing Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*, which he later performed for Queensland Opera. Ashraf made his United States debut in 2004 with Opera Colorado performing the role of Leporello in *Don Giovanni*. Quickly becoming a house favorite, he subsequently performed there as Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and The King of Egypt in *Aida*. Mr. Sewailam returns to Tulsa Opera, following his company debut as the Second Soldier in the Oklahoma premiere of Richard Strass’ *Salome*.



ROBERT MELLON, TADDEO

Baritone Robert Mellon is known for having a “dark baritone, full and fresh and quick with dramatic fire.” In 2022 he sings Papageno with Pensacola Opera, Iago in *Othello* with INSeries Opera, Marillo in *Rigoletto* with Opera Philadelphia and performs the title role in *Falstaff* with Union Avenue Opera. In 2021 Robert won critical praise for his debut in the title role

in Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Union Avenue Opera, returned to Opera Oviedo for Marcello in *La bohème* and Gubetta in *Lucrezia Borgia*, and sang his first Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* with Opera Las Vegas. In 2020 he returned to Syracuse Opera as Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, performed the title role in *Gianni Schicchi* and *Eine Florentinische Tragödie* with Livermore Valley Opera, plus Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Shreveport Opera, Papageno in *The Magic Flute* with Las Vegas Opera, and Schaunard in *La bohème* with San Diego Opera. In 2019 Robert debuted *Dear Erich* with NYCO, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with Syracuse Opera, Tonio in *Pagliacci* and Simone in *Eine Florentinische Tragödie* at Opera Oviedo, Spain. He was winner of a Sullivan Foundation award and career grant. Other: NY Festival of Song, National Sawdust Festival, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Opera Maine, Peoria Symphony, the U.S. premiere of Philip Glass’s *The Trial* and Hector in the U.S. premiere of *The House Taken Over*.

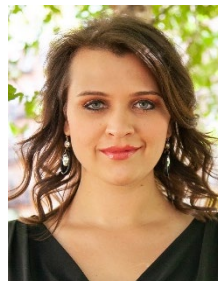


ABIGAIL RAIFORD, ELVIRA

Lyric coloratura soprano Abigail Raiford is a native of Queens, New York who has caught the eyes and ears of many in the music world. This season, she made her debut with the St. Petersburg Opera Company, covering Despina in *Così fan tutte* and singing Olympia in Davies’ *Pinocchio*, and joined Central City Opera as a Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Studio

Artist. She also returned to Sarasota Opera, where she first performed as an Apprentice Artist in their winter 2020 season, taking the stage as Second Witch and covering Belinda in their production of *Dido & Aeneas* in spring 2021 and appeared again as an Apprentice Artist for the Winter 2022 season. Recently, she won Second Prize in the SAS Performing Arts Company Vocal Competition, was a Finalist in the NH Opera Idol Virtual Competition, and was a Semi-Finalist in the Artist Division of the

Camille Coloratura Awards. A lover of Mozart, her most performed operatic roles have been the Queen of the Night (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Despina (*Così fan tutte*). Other highlights include Rose Murrant (*Street Scene*), First Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*), Anicasia (*La Dolorosa*), and Yum-Yum (*The Mikado*). She has gained recognition on the operatic and concert stages with her thrilling vocalism and has trained in programs across the country, as well as in Vienna, Austria. Bachelor of Music from the University of Tulsa.



ELISSA PFAENDER, ZULMA

Praised as an artist who “exudes power in every detail of her body language and voice...” Mezzo-soprano Elissa Pfaender is a dynamic artist whose experience allows her to successfully perform a variety of repertoire. Highlights of this season include debuting as Zulma in Tulsa Opera’s 75th Anniversary Season production of *L’Italiana in Algeri*, singing

Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with New York City Opera, as well as being a 2022 Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. At OTSL, Ms. Pfaender debuted the role of Dr. Landau in the world premiere of Tobias Picker’s *Awakenings*, where she was praised for her “mellifluous mezzo... with chest tones of chilling power.” Additionally, she covered the title role of *Carmen* and Third Lady (*The Magic Flute*). Ms. Pfaender frequently performs with New York City Opera, in addition to Sarasota Opera, Savannah Voice Festival, Manchester Music Festival, The National Endowment for the Arts YoungArts Foundation amongst others. During her time as an Apprentice Artist with Sarasota Opera for their 60th Anniversary Season, Ms. Pfaender was awarded the prestigious “Anne J. O’Donnell Outstanding Apprentice Artist Award” by the Sarasota Opera Guild for her talent, skill, and musicianship. Equally at home with concert work, she has performed as a soloist for Bach’s *Magnificat* and Schubert’s *Mass in G* with orchestra. She has received awards and honors from The NEA YoungArts Foundation, The National Opera, Premiere Opera Foundation, Riverside Opera Company, Tuesday Musical Association, and more.



V. SAVOY MCILWAIN, ALI

V. Savoy McIlwain, Bass-Baritone, hails from Washington D.C., and is a graduate of Duke Ellington School of the Arts. He holds a BM from the University of Northern Iowa, MM from the University of Maryland, College Park and is currently a McNair Fellow in the University of Maryland, College Park’s DMA Vocal Performance Program. His national credits

include Marcello in Puccini’s *La Bohème*, Morales in Bizet’s *Carmen*, and Leporello in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*. International credits include Jake and Jim in Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*, and Guglielmo in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*. His concert works include Ysaye Barnwell’s *Fortune’s Bones*, Handel’s *Messiah*, Rossini’s *Stabat Mater*, Saint-Saëns’ *Christmas Oratorio*, and Ralph Vaughan Williams’ *Serenade to Music*. His theatrical credits include Thomas Rutling in Tazewell Thompson’s *Jubilee*, the titular role in *Sweeney Todd* by Stephen Sondheim, and Joe in Kern & Hammerstein’s *Show Boat*. In recent performances, Mr. McIlwain debuted the role of Officer Jones in *Sunder* by Nailah Nombeko with Annapolis Opera. He has also played Spencer Coyle in Britten’s *Owen Wingrave* presented by the Maryland Opera Studio and the National Orchestral Institute and Festival. www.vsavoymcilwain.com.

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