

AUSTIN OPERA ANNOUNCES ITS 2024-2025 SEASON

Three productions at the Long Center include the highly anticipated return of a timely political thriller, launch of a new Opera Unleashed program for masterpieces of the canon, and a groundbreaking partnership with Opera San Antonio on one of opera's most beloved classics

Plus, experience the earliest stages of a new opera through the
Opera ATX Residency for Latinx Creatives

(Austin, TX—Tuesday, April 30, 2024) Austin Opera today announces its 2024-2025 season, including three productions at the Long Center for the Performing Arts and the launch of a new program in celebration of Timothy Myers' 2023 appointment as the Sarah and Ernest Butler Music Director.

The season opens in what is sure to be a politically charged November 2024 with the return of the compelling political thriller *The Manchurian Candidate*, which delighted a packed house in its one-night-only 2016 Austin Opera debut. February brings the company premiere of *Verdi's Requiem* in the launch of a new series, Opera Unleashed: Epic Masterpieces with Timothy Myers, featuring the powerful voices of soprano Leah Crocetto, mezzo-soprano Daniela Mack, and tenor Limmie Pulliam in their company debuts, alongside returning bass Wei Wu and a supersized chorus. The season closes with the beauty and tragedy of Giacomo Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, presented in a groundbreaking new co-production with Opera San Antonio.

Austin Opera will also welcome composer Jorge Sosa and librettist John de los Santos to workshop a new one-act opera, *OFRENDA: A "Día de Muertos" Story* as part of the **Opera ATX Residency for Latinx Creatives**.

"The 2024-2025 Season offers a fresh journey for both longtime opera lovers and newcomers to the art form, with performances of one masterpiece composed 150 years ago and another written as recently as 2015, alongside a unique opportunity to experience a new opera as it is being developed," said **Annie Burridge**, Austin Opera's General Director and CEO. "I am especially thrilled to launch our partnership with Opera San Antonio with a new co-production of *Madame Butterfly* that harnesses the artistic resources of both companies, conducted by Sarah and Ernest Butler Music Director Timothy Myers and directed by E. Loren Meeker, Opera San Antonio's General Director."

2024-2025 Season subscriptions will go on sale to new subscribers on Tuesday, April 30, 2024. Current subscribers can renew their seats for the 2024-2025 Long Center Season and learn more about the Opera ATX workshop.

Individual tickets for the season will be available on Thursday, September 5, 2024. Subscriptions and single tickets can be purchased at www.austinopera.org.

Austin Opera's Season at the Long Center for the Performing Arts

***The Manchurian Candidate* by Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell**

Saturday, November 9, 2024– 7:30 pm

Sunday, November 10, 2024– 2:00 pm

Austin Opera's 2024-2025 season opens at the Long Center in November with *The Manchurian Candidate*, the compelling operatic adaptation of Richard Condon's 1959 political thriller by composer Kevin Puts and librettist Mark Campbell – the same team that created the Pulitzer-Prize-winning *Silent Night*. Winner of four Austin Critics Table Awards, this complex and gripping story of patriotism, corruption, political ambition, and eleventh-hour self-sacrifice will make its highly anticipated return to the Long Center stage after its critically acclaimed 2016 Austin debut, which was called “utterly contemporary” with “visceral intensity” by the *Austin American Statesman*.

Baritone Mark Diamond, last seen in Austin as the love-struck Anthony in *Sweeney Todd*, stars as Sgt. Raymond Shaw, the U.S. soldier and war hero caught in a web of political intrigue. Unbeknownst to him, at the center of the web of conspiracy is his own mother Eleanor, performed by Metropolitan Opera soprano Mary Dunleavy in her Austin Opera debut. Also caught in the intrigue is Shaw's former girlfriend Jocelyn, sung by 2024 GRAMMY nominee soprano Rachel Blaustein in her Austin Opera debut, and her father Senator Johnny Iselin, sung by commanding bass-baritone Kyle Albertson.

GRAMMY award-winning tenor Frederick Ballentine, known for his “dramatic and musical heft” (*Washington Post*), makes his company debut as Captain Ben Marco, Shaw's war buddy who realizes his friend has been brainwashed into being an unwitting “sleeper assassin.” A role immortalized on film by actors Frank Sinatra and Denzel Washington, Marco leads the thrilling chase to the opera's conclusion to prevent the assassination of Shaw's most high-profile target, a presidential candidate.

Director Alison Moritz's award-winning staging brings Sarah and Ernest Butler Music Director Timothy Myers and the Austin Opera Orchestra onto the stage to build the intensity of this dramatic thriller set against the powerfully cinematic backdrop of Greg Emetaz's visual projections, Vince Herod's scenic design, and Kathryn Eader's dramatic lighting.

Opera Unleashed: Verdi's Requiem

Saturday, February 1, 2025– 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 2, 2025– 2:00 pm

In celebration of Timothy Myers' 2023 appointment as the Sarah and Ernest Butler Music Director, Austin Opera is thrilled to announce the launch of a new series: **Opera Unleashed: Epic Masterpieces with Timothy Myers**. Opera Unleashed will offer a series of company premieres over the coming seasons featuring some of the most historically significant works composed for the operatic voice. First up, is the company premiere of one of the canon's most thrilling masterpieces, Giuseppe Verdi's *Requiem*.

Declared an "opera in ecclesiastical costume" at its world premiere in 1874, Verdi's *Requiem* is a monumental work for the human voice, that will mark the Austin Opera debuts of three star singers as soloists. Described by *The New York Times* as possessing an "agile coloratura technique and a feeling for the Italianate style... with warmth, full penetrating sound and tenderness," American soprano Leah Crocetto continues to astonish audiences. Critically acclaimed for her interpretation of Verdi's music, she has previously sung this epic work with Opera Philadelphia, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

Mezzo-soprano Daniela Mack has thrilled audiences with "a voice like polished onyx: strong, dark, deep and gleaming" (*Opera News*). Currently starring in the Metropolitan Opera's new production of John Adams' *El Niño*, Mack is as renowned for Verdi repertoire as she is in creating roles in world premieres like Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell's *Elizabeth Cree* (title role) at Opera Philadelphia, and in David T. Little and Royce Vavrek's *JFK* (Jacqueline Kennedy) at Fort Worth Opera.

Boasting "the requisite combination of full-throated dramatic vocal power and intimate lyricism," tenor Limmie Pulliam thrills audiences with his captivating stage presence and sound. The Missouri native made his Metropolitan Opera debut in December 2022 and Carnegie Hall debut in January 2023, completing a career renaissance after a 12-year break from singing.

They join bass Wei Wu, last seen as Kôbun in *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* in 2022. The Austin Opera Chorus will team up with the professional members of Chorus Austin to form a 75-voice group under the leadership of Austin Opera Chorus Conductor Cina Crisara.

"Verdi is undoubtedly one of opera's most popular and revered composers. It is a gift to have an opportunity to explore one of his greatest works that is not only unforgettably powerful in performance, but also gives us greater insight into one of the 'greats.' As will be a hallmark of this series, we're thrilled to showcase the musical might of the Austin Opera Orchestra, Chorus, and world-class soloists, for our beloved city of Austin," said Austin Opera's Sarah and Ernest Butler Music Director Timothy Myers.

In addition to serving as the launch for Opera Unleashed, the Austin Opera premiere of Verdi's *Requiem* will mark the 150th Anniversary of the work's premiere and the 60th Anniversary of Chorus Austin. The Opening Night performance will be followed by a festive celebration to commemorate the monumental achievements of Austin's collaborative arts community.

Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*

Friday, April 25, 2025 – 7:30 pm

Saturday, April 26, 2025 – 7:30 pm

Sunday, April 27, 2025 – 2:00 pm

The final opera of the season spotlights the mesmerizing beauty and heart-rending tragedy of Giacomo Puccini's poignant *Madame Butterfly*, presented in a groundbreaking co-production with Opera San Antonio that will debut on April 17, 2025, at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts and then immediately come to the Long Center for three performances from April 25-27, 2025.

In one of opera's most heartbreaking stories, the young geisha Cio-Cio-San, affectionately known as "Butterfly," is seduced by the dashing U.S. Navy Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton. After a hasty wedding separating Cio-Cio-San from her family, Pinkerton abandons her to return to America. Cio-Cio-San raises their son with the help of her maid Suzuki and never loses faith in her true love, but when Pinkerton's ship finally returns to the harbor three years later, her faith is replaced by devastating despair.

Hailed as a "true artist" (*Opera News*), soprano Raquel González stars as Cio-Cio-San. A winner of the prestigious Sphinx Organization's Medal of Excellence Award, González was last seen at Austin Opera as Micaëla in *Carmen* in 2024. Tenor Joseph Dennis, last seen at Austin Opera as Nikolaus Sprink in *Silent Night* in 2019, takes on the role of Pinkerton. Praised by the *New York Times* for his "hardy baritone voice and dramatic authority, Malcolm Mackenzie makes his company debut as the US Consul Sharpless. Making her company debut in the role of Suzuki, Butterfly's only friend and confidante, mezzo-soprano Kristen Choi has been dubbed "a powerhouse in the making" by *Opera News*. Seen in 2023 as Beppe in *Pagliacci*, GRAMMY-nominated tenor Rodell Rosel returns as the scheming marriage broker Goro, and returning for his third straight Austin Opera season, after performances in both *Fidelio* and *The Pearl Fishers*, is bass Hidenori Inoue. Movement and Cultural Consultants Kevin and Momo Suzuki join the creative team.

Conducted by Sarah and Ernest Butler Music Director Timothy Myers and directed by E. Loren Meeker, Opera San Antonio's General Director, this stunning and traditional production of *Madame Butterfly* is a groundbreaking partnership between Austin Opera and Opera San Antonio, harnessing the artistic resources of both companies.

Opera ATX Residency for Latinx Creatives

Inside Look at *OFRENDA: A “Día de Muertos” Story*

Date and Details on Public Workshop TBA

In 2023, Austin Opera announced the latest development for Opera ATX – the company’s boundary-pushing series championing innovative operatic experiences and the artists and creative teams that bring them to life. Beginning last season, the Opera ATX Residency for Latinx Creatives began providing a unique workshopping space for Latinx composer/librettist teams to advance projects that will ultimately extend the scope of operatic storytelling.

During the 2024-2025 Season, Austin Opera will welcome Mexican-born composer Jorge Sosa and Mexican American librettist John de los Santos to Austin for a ten-day residency to workshop their new one-act opera, *OFRENDA: A “Día de Muertos” Story*.

“Including Latinx storytellers is vital in creating an operatic canon more representative of our community, especially here in Austin. *OFRENDA* offers a unique perspective that features the strength and complexity of family, themes that resonate deeply with me as an immigrant. This residency is a testament to the growing power and visibility of Latinx creatives. I am excited to champion the work of these incredible artists,” said Austin Opera Curator of Hispanic & Latinx Programming Claudia Chapa.

Known for his “dreamlike and sometimes even nightmarish music” (*Crescendo Magazine*), Sosa has worked in a wide range of styles and media, covering everything from electronic music to opera, with an eclectic mix of styles and influences that converge to shape an original and personal voice. *Opera News* described his digital opera *Alice in the Pandemic* as “wildly imaginative, musically powerful and technically courageous.” Stage director and librettist de los Santos has been called a “brilliant combination of literary insight and choreographic creativity” (*D Magazine*). He has written two operas with composer Clint Borzoni, *When Adonis Calls* and *The Copper Queen*.

OFRENDA: A “Día de Muertos” Story is a multi-generational story about healing, family, kindness, and sacrifice sung in both Spanish and English. Austin Opera will collaborate with the Consulate General of Mexico in Austin to offer invitations to witness the workshopping process during the season.

“We believe it is important to tell a range of Latinx stories, including stories that highlight our unique traditions and the strength of our family structures,” said Santos.

“There are roughly 62 million people who identify as Latinx in the United States, and we are the fastest growing demographic in this country. Yet, we are massively underrepresented in the arts. This residency is an invaluable opportunity to advance the creation of our opera so that more audiences can experience works about people that look and sound like us,” added Sosa.

In 2022 Austin Opera announced the Butler Fund for Spanish Programming, a \$3 million endowment funded by Austin philanthropists Sarah and Ernest Butler to support Spanish-language programming at the company in perpetuity. The historic gift also funded the appointment of Claudia Chapa as the company's first-ever Curator for Hispanic and Latinx Programming.

Austin Opera's 2024-2025 Season at the Long Center

THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE

Saturday, November 9, 2024– 7:30 pm

Sunday, November 10, 2024– 2:00 pm

Music by Kevin Puts

Libretto by Mark Campbell

Conductor – Timothy Myers

Director – Alison Moritz

Scenic Design – Vince Herod

Projection Design – Greg Emetaz

Lighting Design – Kathryn Eader

Cast

Sergeant Raymond Shaw – Mark Diamond+

Eleanor Iselin – Mary Dunleavy+*

Captain Ben Marco – Frederick Ballentine+*

Jocelyn Jordan – Rachel Blaustein+*

Johnny Iselin – Kyle Albertson+*

* Austin Opera Debut

+ Role Debut

Featuring the Austin Opera Orchestra

Production owned by Austin Opera

In English with projected English titles

Approximately 2 hours in length, including one 20-minute intermission.

VERDI'S REQUIEM

Part of Opera Unleashed: Epic Masterpieces with Timothy Myers

Saturday, February 1, 2025– 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 2, 2025– 2:00 pm

Music by Giuseppe Verdi

Conductor – Timothy Myers
Chorus Master – Cina Crisara
Lighting Design – Jim Sale

Cast

Soprano - Leah Crocetto*
Mezzo-soprano - Daniela Mack*
Tenor - Limmie Pulliam*
Bass - Wei Wu

Featuring the Austin Opera Orchestra, the Austin Opera Chorus, and Chorus Austin.

* Austin Opera Debut

In Latin with projected English titles
Approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes in length

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Friday, April 25, 2025 – 7:30 pm
Saturday, April 26, 2025 – 7:30 pm
Sunday, April 27, 2025– 2:00 pm

Music by Giacomo Puccini
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

Conductor – Timothy Myers
Director – E. Loren Meeker
Scenic Design – John Gunter
Costume Design – Alice Bristow
Lighting Design – Marcella Barbeau
Movement and Cultural Consultants – Momo and Kevin Suzuki

* Austin Opera Debut

Cast

Cio-Cio-San - Raquel González
B.F. Pinkerton - Joseph Dennis
Sharpless - Malcolm Mackenzie*
Suzuki - Kristen Choi*
Goro – Rodell Rosel

Bonze - Hidenori Inoue

Featuring the Austin Opera Orchestra

In Italian with projected English titles

Approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes in length, including one 20-minute intermission.

About Austin Opera

Serving Central Texas since 1986, Austin Opera inspires audiences with its trademark blend of innovation and artistic excellence. With the leadership of General Director & CEO Annie Burridge and the Sarah and Ernest Butler Music Director Timothy Myers, Austin Opera presents a curated season of grand opera productions at the Long Center, the crown jewel of Austin performing arts venues. Combining the finest American and international stars with the outstanding local talent of our Orchestra and Chorus, Austin Opera's productions include accessible takes on classic operas as well as challenging new works that reinforce the continuing relevance of opera.

Opera ATX, powered by Austin Opera, brings groundbreaking new works, emerging artists, exciting composers, and dynamic directors to Austin. By tapping into the city's live music DNA, Opera ATX reflects the spirit of the city and the pioneering image it is known for. The Company creates the conditions for operatic experiences completely new to Austin—and perhaps completely new to the art form—by exploring alternative venues and unique local partnerships. Driven by Austin Opera's love of opera, love of audiences, and love of Austin, Opera ATX shows how Austin is shaping its opera company and inspiring innovative experiences.

Live from Indy Terrace, Austin Opera's digital channel is the home of original content free to patrons and includes recitals, interviews, fan-favorite programs like *Conductor Cues* and *Opera Overtures*, and broadcasts of the company's new series *Concerts at the Consulate*. *Concerts at the Consulate*, programmed in partnership with the Consulate General of Mexico in Austin, spotlight Latinx composers and performers and celebrate Hispanic culture.

Austin Opera is also a force in hundreds of classrooms across Central Texas, nurturing the next generation of opera audiences through its award-winning education programs. Austin Opera works directly with educators, community leaders, students, and parents to make opera relevant, educational, and entertaining for students of all ages.

In 2020, Austin Opera was voted "Opera Company of the Year"—and Timothy Myers was named "Conductor of the Year"—in the [BroadwayWorld Opera Awards](#).

To learn more about Austin Opera, visit austinopera.org or follow along on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), or [Twitter](#) at @austinopera.

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