

For Immediate Release
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The Music and Movement of *Maria de Buenos Aires* centerstage in Columbus

The sensual rhythms of tango combine with operatic passions in *Maria de Buenos Aires* is bringing heat to the Ohio February Air. Astor Piazzolla's revolutionary *nuevo tango score* and Horacio Ferrer's mesmerizing poetry unite the ghostly realm with the physical world to portray the spiritual journey of the opera's heroine.

Monica Danilov makes her Opera Columbus debut in the title role, with Jose Miguel Garcia as El Duende, and with Paul La Rosa returning to the company as El Payador and dancers from Strictly Tango Columbus. Dennis Whitehead Darling (Opera Columbus' *La boheme*) directs, with ProMusica Chamber Orchestra playing Piazzolla's score under the direction of Rolando Salazar in his Opera Columbus debut.

Darling, who has worked extensively in musical theatre as well as opera, is no stranger to combining music and dance to bring stories to life. On blending the music and the movement, he says "This work has the inherent potential to use Tango music and its dance form to tell the surrealist story of *Maria de Buenos Aires*. Working collaboratively with the tango choreographer, Amie Cressie, to create a performance that produces storytelling through graceful and exact physical action is always exciting."

The production also marks **the first presentation of a Spanish-language opera in the Columbus area**, a milestone that Opera Columbus General Director + CEO Julia Noulín-Mérat is glad to see realized. "Producing Spanish-language opera was long overdue for the Columbus community, and we're thrilled to be presenting Piazzolla's mesmerizing piece," she says. "*Maria* opens the door to even more members of the wider Columbus community, and invites them to really embrace our motto – 'Make It Yours'."

Opera Columbus is partnering with a number of local organizations on events online and around the city that will bring audiences further into the world of *Maria*. These events include a SALON: Cocktail Hour with Fashion designer Gerardo Encinas from Encinas Designs (Feb 2, 6:00-6:45pm, virtual); God's of Tango Opera Columbus Book Club (Feb 13, 10:00-11:30am, The Columbus Metropolitan Library); Coffee with the Creatives, featuring Dennis Whitehead Darling + Rolando Salazar (Feb 15, 10:00-11:15am, Ohio Theatre- Room 4); Encinas Fashion Showcase (February 20th at 8pm, Southern Theatre) and a Fashion and Design Panel in partnership with the Columbus Metropolitan Library with Gerardo Encinas from Encinas Designs (Feb 22, 3:30-4:30pm, virtual). ***In addition, attendees at each performance will have the opportunity to tango onstage one hour prior to showtime.***

Maria de Buenos Aires will be performed at the Southern Theatre on February 24 at 7:30pm and February 26 at 2pm. Performances run approximately 85 minutes with no intermission. Ticket prices range from \$28 - \$108. **Opera Columbus proud to partner with Columbus Fashion Week, Encinas Designs, ProMusica Chamber Orchestra, Strictly Tango and Festival Latino. Production sponsor Cardinal Health and Arts Midwest.**

For tickets and additional information, please visit <https://www.operacolumbus.org/maria/>.



CAST & CREATIVE

Monica Danilov, *Maria*; Paul LaRosa, *El Payador*; Jose Gabriel Garcia, *El Duende*;

Ensemble: KatieAnn Bonavita, Stephanie Durant, Billy Edwards, Ryan Patrick Jones, Anabella Petronsi, Austin Wood.

Tangueros: Amie Cressie, Francesco Guerra, Mackenzie Jones, Penny Johnson, Katie Myers, Jorge Rojas.

Dennis Whitehead-Darling, Director; Rolando Salazar, Conductor; Amie Cressie, Tango Choreographer; Sarah Danhke, Choreographer and Assistant Director; Gerardo Encinas, Costumes; Marcella Barbeau, Lighting, Tony Koehler, Props

About Opera Columbus

Under the vision of General Director + CEO, Julia Noulín-Mérat, Opera Columbus is redefining and reimagining the concept of regional opera with world-class productions that celebrate extraordinary talent and artistic partnerships, engaging a new, diverse audience for this most magnificent of artforms. From groundbreaking collaborations to innovative and breathtaking productions, Opera Columbus is passionate about creating artistic moments for each and every

patron. Opera Columbus's slogan, "Make It Yours," demonstrates the company's commitment to inclusivity, and invites everyone in the community to join with us.

About Maria de Buenos Aires

Born in the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Argentina "on a day that God was drunk," Maria heads to the center of town on her quest for freedom. She is quickly seduced by the music of the tango, and her world devolves into darkness, with the gritty streets claiming her as their own. Maria's spirit survives, returning to haunt the city of her birth in death.

For more information, visit www.OperaColumbus.org

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Join the conversation by using #CinderellaOC #MariaOC #RigolettoOC #StirOC #CooperBing #MakeltYours #OperaCbus

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Opera Columbus is additionally grateful for the support of Arts Midwest, Cardinal Health, The Columbus Foundation, Cult Marketing, Greater Columbus Arts Council, Nationwide, National Endowment for the Arts, Ohio Arts Council, and The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center-Voice Center.