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**San Diego Opera Announces Production Lineup for 2025-2026 Season:
*Pagliacci, The Barber of Seville and Carmen***

**Yves Abel Extends His Contract For Five More Years;
Abel Will Serve as Principal Conductor Through the 2031–32 Season**

Subscriptions are on sale now; single tickets go on sale Tuesday, Sept. 2

SAN DIEGO (APRIL 28, 2025) – On the heels of a landmark 60th anniversary season, the [San Diego Opera](#) – one of San Diego’s preeminent cultural organizations – proudly announces the lineup for its 61st season. With an exciting variety of productions and slate of stellar talent, San Diego Opera continues elevating the community’s arts and culture landscape with outstanding opera and vocal performance.

San Diego Opera’s 2025–2026 season opens with Ruggero Leoncavallo’s tragic tale of love and betrayal, ***Pagliacci***, running **October 31 – November 2**. The season continues with Gioachino Rossini’s hilarious comedy ***The Barber of Seville***, **February 13–15, 2026**, followed by Georges Bizet’s iconic tragedy ***Carmen*** from **March 27–29**. Building on the success of its 60th anniversary season, which expanded performances from two to three per production—including the return of the Saturday evening shows—this season will follow the same schedule, with performances Friday through Sunday for each opera.

“I couldn’t be more excited about the season,” says General Director **David Bennett**. “These are not only three of the greatest operas ever written, they give us such variety—from the gritty *verismo* melodrama of *Pagliacci*, to the hilarious shenanigans and high energy of *The Barber of Seville*, to the fiery passion of Bizet’s *Carmen*. They also offer amazing roles that are the perfect fit for the exceptional artists we’ve selected. There’s such an excitement at San Diego Opera right now. The energy of our tireless staff continues to build, and while we’re doing so much beyond the operas—from music education in the schools to concerts throughout San Diego County—the opera season is always the center of what we do, celebrating the human voice and its capacity to tell stories. We can’t wait for the curtain to rise.”

Audiences can once again look forward to enjoying the highly sought-after established and emerging operatic talent that San Diego Opera patrons have experienced for more than sixty years. Baritone **Kidon Choi** returns to San Diego to perform as the clown Tonio in *Pagliacci*, while mezzo-soprano **Stephanie Doche** executes Rosina’s thrilling vocal fireworks in *The Barber of Seville*. Choi and Doche were last seen in SDO’s 2024 production of *Madama Butterfly*. Bass-baritone **Patrick Carfizzi**, whom *The New York Times* described as “the heart and soul” of the Metropolitan Opera, where he has performed over 400 times, returns to San Diego to reprise the role of Don Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*. San Diego’s own **Guadalupe Paz**—who sang the role of Frida Kahlo in San Diego Opera’s world premiere *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*—returns to perform the tragic title role in *Carmen*.

In addition to these return engagements, many gifted vocalists will make their San Diego Opera debuts. Praised for his “riveting” and “full-bodied tenor” (*Opera Today*), **Jonathan Burton** will perform the iconic role of Canio in *Pagliacci*. Soprano **Hailey Clark** also makes her debut in *Pagliacci*, lending her “confident

and supple lyric soprano” (*Opernglas*) to the role of Canio’s wife Nedda. Other artists debuting in San Diego in *The Barber of Seville* include “superb” (*Bachtrack*) baritone **Dean Murphy** in his calling-card role as the barber Figaro, 2025 Luciano Pavarotti Competition-winning tenor **Minghao Liu** as Count Almaviva, and bass-baritone **Craig Colcough**—praised for “cutting edge timbre and richness of tone” (*Classical Source*)—as Don Basilio. Mezzo-soprano **Melody Wilson**, whom *Classical Singer Magazine* called “an opera singer to watch,” debuts as the title character in *Carmen*, along with rising-star tenors **Thomas Kinch** and **Jonathan Kaufman** as Don José. Soprano and recent winner of the Metropolitan Opera’s Laffont Competition **Lydia Grindatto** debuts as Micaëla while baritone **Aleksey Bogdanov** bows as the toreador Escamillo. These artists have performed on the world’s most renowned opera stages including The Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera, Welsh National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, and San Francisco Opera.

Each production will be accompanied by the renowned **San Diego Symphony Orchestra**. San Diego Opera’s Principal Conductor **Yves Abel** will lead the productions of *Pagliacci* and *The Barber of Seville*. *Pagliacci* will be directed by **Christopher Mattaliano**, who has directed productions for houses like The Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, and Washington National Opera. **Chuck Hudson**—whose “inventive staging” (*Opera News*) has been seen at Minnesota Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, and Seattle Opera—will direct *The Barber of Seville*. **Louis Lohraseb**, who has previously conducted productions for LA Opera, The Atlanta Opera and more – will conduct *Carmen*. The director of *Carmen* will be announced at a later date.

Yves Abel Renews His Contract to Serve as San Diego Opera’s Principal Conductor

San Diego Opera is happy to announce that Maestro **Yves Abel** has renewed his contract as Principal Conductor, a position he has held since the 2020–21 season. His current contract runs through the 2026–27 season, and the five-year extension will see Maestro Abel in the San Diego Opera orchestra pit through the 2031–32 season.

“The San Diego Opera has been one of the great joys of my artistic life,” says Abel. “Closely collaborating with David Bennett in ensuring the finest international level has been most meaningful. And our partnership with the world class San Diego Symphony and our very own San Diego Opera Chorus has made for performances of the highest standards. I eagerly look forward to *Pagliacci* and *The Barber of Seville* next year as well as other future adventures.”

A regular guest with the world’s greatest orchestras and opera companies, Abel has conducted in such theaters as Metropolitan Opera New York, ROH Covent Garden London, Wiener Staatsoper, Teatro alla Scala, Opéra National de Paris, Gran Teatre del Liceu de Barcelona, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, Rossini Opera Festival di Pesaro, Teatro dell’Opera di Roma, Teatro San Carlo di Napoli, New National Theatre Tokyo, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Savonlinna Opera Festival, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, and the Royal Swedish Opera. He was Principal Guest Conductor of the Deutsche Oper Berlin from 2005-2013.

Previously the Chief Conductor of the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie (2015–21), Abel has performed in concert with such important orchestras as the San Francisco Symphony, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lyon, Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini Parma, the Orchestra of

St. Luke's, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, and the Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna, Orchestra of the Teatro di San Carlo, and the The Bochumer Symphoniker.

Opera Today called Abel "a splendid Rossini conductor" who "knows how to achieve the expanses of lyricism that suspend all sense of time." In its review of a San Francisco Opera production, the *San Francisco Chronicle* noted Abel's "welcome return after an unconscionable 20-year absence to lead a performance of tenderness and dramatic urgency." *L'Ape Musicale* praised Abel for "elegantly accompanying the singers, communicating consistently with the stage, and executing everything with precision." And *La Nueva España* said, "One has to say it very clearly and often. The presence of Yves Abel in the pit is a luxury. The work that Abel realizes with each new lyric appearance is intense and the results impeccable from start to finish. He is, without doubt, the key."

"Yves Abel is one of the reasons attending San Diego Opera is a world-class experience," says General Director David Bennett. "He has an extraordinarily deft touch with the wide variety and historical periods of opera music, whether classical, baroque, or even contemporary. The San Diego Symphony musicians love working with him, and he's also forged a bond with San Diego audiences, from the ticket buyers who return to see him conduct to board members and supporters who value his friendship. I'm thrilled that our collaboration will continue as we write the next chapter in San Diego Opera history."

A Franco-Canadian, Abel has a particular affinity with the French repertoire. He has won significant critical acclaim for his achievements as founder (in 1988) and Music Director of L'Opéra Français de New York, with whom he has rediscovered rare French operas and also performed the world premiere of Dusapin's *To Be Sung*. Also for this activity, in 2009, he was awarded the title "Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres" by the French Government.

His recordings include *Thaïs* with Renée Fleming and *Werther* with Andrea Bocelli (Decca), *Madama Butterfly* with the Philharmonia Orchestra (Chandos), French arias collections – one with Susan Graham and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (Erato) and one with Patricia Petibon and the Orchestra of the Opera National de Lyon (Decca) – and *Romantique*, romantic arias collection with Elīna Garanča (Deutsche Grammophon).

2025–26 SAN DIEGO OPERA PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Subscription prices for three-opera packages range from \$156 to \$921

Single ticket prices range from \$53 - \$346 (single ticket prices subject to change)

Pagliacci

Oct. 31 – Nov. 2, 2025

San Diego Civic Theatre

Ruggero Leoncavallo – Music and libretto

Yves Abel – Conductor

Christopher Mattaliammo – Director

Jonathan Burton – Canio

Hailey Clark – Nedda

Kidon Choi – Tonio

The tears of a clown can be deadly. Canio is a comic actor in a troupe of street performers touring the Italian countryside. He also has a hair-trigger temper, and there are whispers that his gorgeous wife Nedda might be cheating on him. Leoncavallo's masterful score includes arias like "Stridono lassù" and one of the most famous tenor arias of all time, the iconic and heartbreaking "Vesti la giubba."
Sung in Italian with projected translations in English and Spanish.

The Barber of Seville

Feb. 13–15, 2026

San Diego Civic Theatre
Gioachino Rossini – Music
Cesare Sterbini – Libretto
Yves Abel – Conductor
Chuck Hudson – Director
Dean Murphy – Figaro
Minghao Liu – Count Almaviva
Stephanie Doche – Rosina
Patrick Carfizzi – Bartolo
Craig Colclough – Don Basilio

Rossini's hilarious prequel to Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* was considered a must-see long before Bugs Bunny brought its frenetic overture to an even larger audience. Count Almaviva is in love with the beautiful Rosina, but how can he get past her paranoid and greedy guardian, Dr. Bartolo? Enter the charismatic, quick-witted barber Figaro, who will stop at nothing to play matchmaker for his lovesick friend. Filled with side-splitting hijinks, mistaken identities, and some of the most popular opera music ever written, this *Barber* will have you rolling in the aisles before you leave humming Rossini's infectious tunes.

Sung in Italian with projected translations in English and Spanish.

Carmen

March 27–29, 2026

San Diego Civic Theatre
Georges Bizet – Music
Ludovic Halévy and Henri Meilhac – Libretto
Louis Lohraseb – Conductor
Melody Wilson – Carmen (Fri & Sun)
Guadalupe Paz – Carmen (Sat)
Thomas Kinch – Don José (Fri & Sun)
Jonathan Kaufman – Don José (Sat)
Aleksey Bogdanov – Escamillo
Lydia Grindatto – Micaëla

The most fearless and indomitable heroine in all opera is back! When Carmen tosses a flower to the soldier Don José, he becomes obsessed, leaving his post to join her band of smugglers. But when she loses interest and sets her sights on a bullfighter, Don José may not be able to handle the rejection. With a score packed with opera classics, including "Habanera," "The Toreador Song," and one of the greatest overtures ever written, you'll be joining Don José as you fall under the spell of *Carmen*.

Sung in French with projected translations in English and Spanish.

ABOUT SAN DIEGO OPERA

Founded in 1965, San Diego Opera has delivered exceptional performances and inspiring educational programs to a wide audience in San Diego for 60 seasons, with a strong focus on community partnerships and the transformative and expressive power of the human voice. With a commitment to innovative storytelling, lifelong learning and engagement, and an awareness of great music's power to bring audiences together, San Diego Opera provides a lasting cultural service to its community. To learn more, please visit www.sdopera.org or follow @sandiegoopera on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).