



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

YARITZA VÉLIZ WINS 2023 JAN SHREM AND MARIA MANETTI SHREM EMERGING STARS COMPETITION

Chilean Soprano Earns Award through Popular Vote for
San Francisco Opera Debut as Catrina in
Gabriela Lena Frank and Nilo Cruz's *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*



Yaritza Véliz (Photo: Jacobus Snyman); Véliz as Catrina in *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*; Véliz as Catrina with Daniela Mack as Frida in *El último sueño de Frida y Diego* (Photos: Cory Weaver/San Francisco Opera)

[sfopera.com](https://www.sfopera.com)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (August 11, 2023) — San Francisco Opera announces Yaritza Véliz as the winner of the 2022–23 Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Emerging Stars Competition. The Chilean soprano won over audiences in her “unforgettable,” “triumphant” and “mesmerizing” (*San Francisco Chronicle*) Company debut this summer as Catrina, the Keeper of the Dead, in Gabriela Lena Frank and Nilo Cruz's *El último sueño de Frida y Diego* (*The Last Dream of Frida and Diego*), the Company's first Spanish-language opera commission. Yaritza Véliz is named 2023 Emerging Star of the Year based on a popular vote conducted online at [sfopera.com](https://www.sfopera.com) from July 11 to August 4, 2023. As the winner of the competition, now in its fifth year, Véliz receives a \$10,000 cash prize.

Véliz was one of fourteen artists appearing in San Francisco Opera's 2022–23 Season with support from the Manetti Shrem's Emerging Stars Fund who were nominated for the competition. The other nominees were sopranos Amina Edris (*Antony and Cleopatra*), Deanna Breiwick (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*), Michelle Bradley (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*) and Meigui Zhang (*Orpheus and Eurydice*); mezzo-sopranos Taylor Raven (*Antony and Cleopatra*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, *La Traviata*) and Aigul Akhmetshina (*Eugene Onegin*); countertenors Jake Ingbar (*El último sueño de Frida y Diego*) and Jakub Józef Orliński (*Orpheus and Eurydice*); tenors Evan LeRoy Johnson (*Eugene Onegin*), Ben Bliss (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*), David Butt Philip (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*) and Jonathan Tetelman (*La Traviata*) and bass-baritone Gordon Bintner (*Eugene Onegin*).

Yaritza Véliz said, "I'm delighted and honored to have been named the winner of the Emerging Stars Competition: thank you so much to everyone who voted! Congratulations to my fellow nominees, all of whom are exceptional artists and colleagues. I would like to thank the whole team at San Francisco Opera: *El último sueño de Frida y Diego* is a truly remarkable work, and I shall treasure this experience—and my time in your wonderful city—forever!"

Maria Manetti Shrem said: "Jan and I were thrilled when we learned that Yaritza Véliz won the 2023 Emerging Stars Competition. We are committed to celebrating all the wonderful new artists at San Francisco Opera, who are important to keeping the art form fresh and inspiring. We are happy to continue supporting this competition, and we are excited to give this year's award to Yaritza for her Company debut this summer in Gabriela Lena Frank and Nilo Cruz's *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*."

Jan Shrem added: "We recognize that all of the artists work hard to give powerful, beautiful performances on stage. Our goal is to build awareness of their artistry and talents through the Emerging Stars Competition. Yaritza's critically acclaimed performance as Catrina, Keeper of the Dead, in *El último sueño de Frida y Diego* was beloved by sold-out audiences, and we wish her all the best with her rising career."

The Emerging Star of the Year award is made possible by the Emerging Stars Fund, established through a multi-year, multimillion-dollar gift from Company benefactors Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem. Their gift provides crucial support for San Francisco Opera to celebrate rising artists and engage the opera community. Past recipients of the Emerging Star of the Year award include soprano Andriana Chuchman, baritone Lucas Meachem and tenors Arturo Chacón-Cruz and Atalla Ayan.

ABOUT YARITZA VÉLIZ

A native of Santiago, Chile, soprano Yaritza Véliz made her San Francisco Opera debut in June 2023 as Catrina in Gabriela Lena Frank and Nilo Cruz's *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*. The singer's portrayal was lauded by the *New York Times* as "the work's comic and musical highlight."

Véliz made her U.S. debut in the title role of Handel's *Rodelinda* at the 2021 Aspen Festival, where she was the inaugural "Renée Fleming Artist." The recent member of the Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera was a prizewinner at the 2020 Francisco Viñas competition at Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu.

Recent career highlights include her debut at the Glyndebourne Festival as Mimi in *La Bohème*, which she will reprise at London's Royal Opera in 2024; Alice Ford in Barrie Kosky's production of *Falstaff* at Komische Oper Berlin and Violetta in *La Traviata* in Prague and Santiago. She also sings Suzel (Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz*) in a concert performance with the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam. Future engagements include debuts at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Dallas Opera, Norwegian National Opera, Lorraine Opera and Rouen Opera.

ABOUT MARIA MANETTI SHREM AND JAN SHREM



Maria Manetti Shrem has enjoyed extraordinary success in business, in particular in the fashion industry. Today, her focus is philanthropy, and she and her husband, Jan Shrem, aim to give away the bulk of their wealth in their lifetimes.

Maria and Jan have been San Francisco Opera supporters since 1985 and have provided significant support for opera artists through the establishment of four major funds. Through the Emerging Stars Fund, Jan and Maria help bring some of opera's most exciting rising talents to the stage.

A few years ago, the president of Italy bestowed upon Maria Manetti Shrem the title of Grand Officer of the Order of the Star of Italy. In June 2022, the Mayor of San Francisco, London Breed, along with the City and the County, proclaimed "June 22 Manetti Shrem Day for Philanthropy." In December 2022, she received The Spirit of the Opera award for her devotion to San Francisco Opera and her ongoing support of the art form. She is the

2023 UC Davis Medal recipient for her profound arts legacy and passion for creating opportunities for exploration and education.

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San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by Norby Anderson, Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson, The Dolby Family, Carol and Dixon Doll, Bertie Bialek Elliott, Peter Fenton and Kate Greer, Keith and Priscilla Geeslin, Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation for the Arts, John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn, Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson, Franklin and Catherine Johnson, Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, Bernard and Barbro Osher, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem, Dianne and Tad Taube, Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment Funds, Diane B. Wilsey and Barbara A. Wolfe.

Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera.

San Francisco Opera is supported, in part, by a grant from Grants for the Arts.



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For further press information, contact San Francisco Opera Communications:

Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / jinouye@sfopera.com

Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / jmcmillan@sfopera.com

Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / tconcepcion@sfopera.com