



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tom Evans

602.448.5483 | tom@lumenaz.com

Arizona Opera Restores Full-Season Marion Roose Pullin Arizona Opera Studio

Move gives audiences an intimate opportunity to discover exceptional emerging artists as they build careers on the opera stage

PHOENIX / TUCSON (September 23, 2026) — Arizona Opera is bringing back a full-season Marion Roose Pullin Arizona Opera Studio for 2026/27, creating a yearlong pipeline for exceptional young artists while giving audiences throughout Arizona the opportunity to discover them at an important moment in their careers — before they become the next generation of nationally recognized opera stars.

The 2026/27 Studio class includes five singers — soprano **Francesca Herrera**, mezzo-soprano **Rosario Armas**, tenor **Cameron Howard**, baritone **Jason Edelstein** and bass-baritone **Jose Olivares** — along with pianist **Guzal Isametdinova** and stage director **Sydney Roslin**. The artists will receive professional coaching, performance experience and artistic development throughout the season, appearing in Arizona Opera's mainstage productions as well as the company's new Studio Series of intimate individual concerts.

The return to a full-season program marks a renewed investment in one of Arizona Opera's most important pathways for developing early-career artists. The Studio had operated as a half-season program for the previous two years; its restoration to a yearlong experience provides emerging artists with greater opportunities to perform, train and work alongside established singers, conductors, directors and other opera professionals.

“The Marion Roose Pullin Arizona Opera Studio provides emerging artists the opportunity to bridge from their training into the profession” said Brian DeMaris, General Director of Arizona Opera. “They are performing roles, working with seasoned artists and creative teams, developing their individual voices and learning what it takes to build a career. Just as importantly, they are joining us here in Arizona to serve as ambassadors in our community. We want people to come to a Studio Series performance and think, ‘I saw them here first.’”

FROM EMERGING ARTIST TO PROFESSIONAL

The Marion Roose Pullin Arizona Opera Studio is designed to bridge the gap between academic training and the professional opera world. Its selection process is highly competitive, with several hundred audition recordings submitted and adjudicated as part of the process.

Studio Artists receive opportunities to perform substantial roles rather than simply observe or understudy. They work with professional conductors, directors, coaches and principal artists while developing the artistic, technical and professional skills necessary for a sustainable career.

The impact can be seen throughout the opera industry — and on Arizona Opera's own stages. **Terrence Chin-Loy**, a 2020–22 Studio Artist, went on to perform at The Metropolitan Opera and has returned to Arizona Opera for subsequent role debuts. He describes his Studio experience as a “life- and career-changing experience,” particularly emphasizing the opportunity to perform roles that gave him the chance to grow as both a singer and artist.

Cadie J. Bryan, a 2018–20 Studio Artist, returns to Arizona Opera this season for her role debut as Violetta in *La Traviata*. Bryan credits the Studio with giving her opportunities to develop her artistry and confidence in a professional environment, describing the opportunity to “rise to an occasion in a safe environment” as one of the most valuable things an emerging artist can receive.

Billie Bruley, a 2018–20 Studio Artist, similarly points to the program's featured and leading roles and the opportunity to perform alongside established artists as foundational to her professional development.

The Studio's alumni network extends well beyond Arizona, with former artists going on to careers with major opera companies and arts organizations nationally and internationally.

MEET THE 2026/27 STUDIO ARTISTS

The new class brings together artists from across the United States and internationally:

- **Francesca Herrera, soprano** — Returning for her second season with Arizona Opera, Herrera will perform the Princess in *El Gato con Botas (Puss in Boots)* and will be featured in the Studio Series.
- **Rosario Armas, mezzo-soprano** — A Mexican mezzo-soprano based in New York, Armas joins the Studio after completing graduate studies at the Yale School of Music. She will perform the title role in *El Gato con Botas*.
- **Cameron Howard, tenor** — Howard brings experience spanning opera and musical theater and will perform the Miller in *El Gato con Botas*.
- **Jason Edelstein, baritone** — Edelstein joins the Studio following performances with organizations including Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, the Aspen Music Festival and School and Pensacola Opera. He will perform the King in *El Gato con Botas*.
- **Jose Olivares, bass-baritone** — Olivares joins the Studio after performing with Fort Worth Opera, Finger Lakes Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City and other companies. He will perform the Ogre in *El Gato con Botas*.
- **Guzal Isametdinova, pianist** — An Uzbekistani pianist and international performer, Isametdinova joins the Studio as its pianist and will collaborate with the artists throughout the season.
- **Sydney Roslin, stage director** — A director, writer and performer based in New York, Roslin joins the Studio as its stage director and will direct *El Gato con Botas*.

DISCOVER THE ARTISTS IN THE STUDIO SERIES

The 2026/27 season also introduces the Studio Series, giving audiences the opportunity to experience the Studio Artists in intimate recital settings and hear each artist's individual musical voice.

Rather than presenting the artists only as members of a larger production, the Studio Series puts them at the center of the experience. Each concert provides an opportunity for audiences to hear repertoire selected to showcase the artist's talents, interests and personality — creating a more personal connection between performer and audience.

The five individual Studio Series concerts will be presented in both Phoenix and Tucson:

Jason Edelstein, baritone

Phoenix — October 1, 2026

Tucson — September 29, 2026

Rosario Armas, mezzo-soprano

Phoenix — October 13, 2026

Tucson — November 12, 2026

Cameron Howard, tenor

Phoenix — January 7, 2027

Tucson — January 5, 2027

Jose Olivares, bass-baritone

Phoenix — February 9, 2027

Tucson — February 11, 2027

Francesca Herrera, soprano

Phoenix — March 23, 2027

Tucson — March 30, 2027

The Phoenix concerts will be presented at the Arizona Opera Center, with Tucson performances at The Treasury 1929. Each performance begins at 7:30 p.m. The length of the program is about 75 minutes including a 15-minute intermission.

AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE OF OPERA

The return of the Marion Roose Pullin Arizona Opera Studio to a full-season program is part of Arizona Opera's broader commitment to artist development during its 55th anniversary season. For the artists, the program provides an opportunity to build the experience and professional relationships that can shape a career. For Arizona Opera, it creates a pipeline of talent that can continue to enrich the company's stages for years to come. And for audiences, it offers the chance to discover exceptional performers while they are still emerging.

“We want the Studio to become a name that audiences recognize and trust,” DeMaris said. “When someone sees ‘Marion Roose Pullin Arizona Opera Studio’ on a program, we want them to know that they are going to encounter an artist who has been carefully selected, seriously developed and given meaningful opportunities to grow. And we want our audiences to take pride in knowing they were part of that journey.”

MEDIA & INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

Members of the 2026/27 Marion Roose Pullin Arizona Opera Studio are available for interviews about their experiences as emerging artists, their individual careers and the opportunities provided through the program.

Interview opportunities are also available with **Brian DeMaris**, General Director of Arizona Opera, and **David Margulis**, Director of Artistic Operations and a 2012–14 Marion Roose Pullin Arizona Opera Studio alumnus.

To schedule an interview or request additional information, contact **Tom Evans at 602.448.5483 or tom@lumenaz.com**.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Full performance schedules and ticket information for the 2026–27 season can be found at **azopera.org**.

###

ABOUT ARIZONA OPERA

Arizona Opera connects and inspires communities through artistically vibrant programs and productions that combine music, storytelling, and the human voice, creating inclusive, culturally relevant, and impactful experiences, while ensuring the financial sustainability of opera in our state. Since its inaugural year in 1971 as the Tucson Opera Company, Arizona Opera has produced more than 200 staged operas and concerts. The company's artistic history is rich with a blend of traditional works from the canon, as well as compelling works from the 20th and 21st centuries, and an array of high-impact educational and community engagement programs. For more information visit azopera.org.