



Media Release
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Pacific Opera Victoria Presents *Ainadamar* A Fusion of Flamenco and Classical Music

Victoria, BC – Opening on February 21 at Victoria’s Royal Theatre, Pacific Opera Victoria presents Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* for four performances, February 21, 23, and 27 at 7:30 pm, and February 25 at 2:30 pm. Filled with the passion of flamenco and set in the heat of civil war, *Ainadamar* is a nuanced and spicy tapa-sized delight.

A delicious journey into the true story of queer poet and playwright Federico García Lorca, Golijov’s *Ainadamar* explores his life and assassination through the eyes and voice of his muse, Catalan actress Margarita Xirgu.

Ainadamar is conducted by Pacific Opera’s Principal Conductor, Giuseppe (Joey) Pietraroia, “For the first time in its history Pacific Opera brings you an opera set in Spain and South America sung in Spanish. Golijov’s music is an amalgam of musical styles incorporating traditional Western music with that of Flamenco, Sephardic chant, electro-acoustic, and Middle Eastern influences,” said Pietraroia. “All of this gives us a work that is, rhythmic, raw, and fiery as well as intimate, introspective, and utterly beautiful. I am excited to be bringing this premiere to Pacific Opera audiences. I know they will be moved both body and soul.”

In this new production, originally performed at Opéra de Montréal in 2023, twice Juno-nominated artist, soprano Miriam Khalil, returns to Pacific Opera to take on the role of Margarita Xirgu. Sought after for her interpretation of the works of Golijov, Miriam returns to Pacific Opera after last appearing with the company in 2018 for the composer’s chamber work, *Ayre*. Other Pacific Opera credits include Marzelline in *Fidelio* (2018), Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (2013), and Frasquita in *Carmen* (2012). She was also celebrated by Pacific Opera audiences for her online performance *Songs My Parents Taught Me* (2020), which led to her engagement as a mentor for Pacific Opera’s Civic Engagement Artists as they created their own video recitals while in residence.

Mezzo-soprano Hanna Hipp makes her Pacific Opera debut as Federico García Lorca, a role she recently performed with Welsh National Opera. Hipp has played a variety of trouser roles throughout her career, including Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*, the title role in *Fantasia* and The Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, with *Bachtrack* reviewing her performance, “Mezzo Hanna Hipp sang this trouser role with great energy and thought, her voice conveying her emotions superbly from impetuous anger to growing love.”

Neil Craighead, a bass-baritone that Victoria audiences will recognize from his recent Pacific Opera performance in the 2022 production of Bizet’s *Carmen* as Zuniga, makes his role debut as José Trialdi. Victoria audiences will also remember him from *Flight*, *Fidelio*, *Simone Boccanegra*, and *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Neil is currently pursuing his doctorate at the UBC School of Music.

Local dancers from Alma de España Flamenco Dance Company will be featured in the production, with choreography from company founder Veronica Maguire. The production also features flamenco guitarists, and a seventeen member all female chorus together with six girls from the Victoria Children’s Choir.

The one-act, 80-minute, production is directed by Brian Staufenbiel, who staged this production’s performances at Opéra de Montreal. Maria Fuller serves as Assistant Conductor, returning to Pacific Opera for the second time as a part of the Women in Musical Leadership Program.

Tickets for single performances to the Royal Theatre shows start at \$30. To keep Pacific Opera accessible to students, families, and community organizations, Community Preview tickets are available for \$15. For more information about *Ainadamar* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, opening on April 3, including tickets, visit: [Tickets and Information](https://www.pacificopera.ca/tickets) at [pacificopera.ca](https://www.pacificopera.ca).

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