



opera
SOUTHWEST

GALA 2025



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Opera Southwest 53rd Season Gala

53rd Season Sponsor - City of Albuquerque



Program of the Evening

October 11, 2025

6:00

Welcome and Registration

Drinks and Appetizers

Silent auction *pgs 7-13*

7:15

Dinner

Welcome from Opera Southwest

7:45

Live Auction *pgs 14-20*

8:25

Music *pg 22*

9:00

Auction Checkout and Farewell

Welcome

Thank you for joining us on this very special evening to celebrate fifty-three seasons of opera in Albuquerque.

Our 2025-2026 mainstage season at the National Hispanic Cultural Center begins this October with the second stop of the world premiere performances of *Dolores*. The music has been composed by **Albuquerque's very own** Nicolàs Lell Benavides to words by librettist Marella Martin Koch. There's something special about the opportunity to present this work at the literal intersection of 4th Street, Avenida César Chávez and Avenida Dolores Huerta. We hope to see you at the performances, October 26-November 2 (Don't wait to get your tickets - we've already added an additional performance to meet the high demand.)



Photo by Cory Weaver for West Edge Opera

Later this season, we return to grand-scale Verdi with *Aida*—our triumphant revival of the 2016 New Mexico premiere—and continue our Masterworks Revival Series with Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto*. Together they showcase the sweep and passion of nineteenth-century Italian opera, reflecting Opera Southwest's hallmark devotion to bel canto and our ongoing project to restore Rossini's neglected masterpieces to the stage where they belong.

We are also celebrating our nomination for an **International Opera**

Award in the category of Rediscovered Work for last spring's *Doña Clementina*. This is our second nomination in this category (2015 for *Amleto*). There are no companies our size that can claim two nominations in ten years - in any category.

This year also marks the second successful season of our merger with the **New Mexico Symphonic Chorus**, a fantastic story of community cooperation that has breathed new life into the chorus.

Behind the scenes, our scene shop is bustling, building productions for companies from California to Florida. Opera Southwest is emerging as a true center of Albuquerque's creative economy; building, creating, and collaborating in ways that strengthen the cultural life of our entire community.

At past galas, your generosity helped launch *The Farolitos of Christmas*, based on the popular children's book by Rudolfo Anaya. This December will witness the premier of that work, by Hector Armienta, which we hope will become an annual tradition for New Mexico families.

We're grateful for your support tonight, and for your continued belief in this company.

Enjoy the evening!



Anthony Barrese
Artistic Director

Tony Zancanella
Executive Director



“Trip of a Lifetime” Opera Grand Tour - Paris & Milan

Only 749 tickets will be sold!

Win an unforgettable European journey for two—an operatic tour through Paris and Milan, the twin capitals of art, fashion, and of course: Opera.

Over ten extraordinary days, you and a guest will travel in comfort and style: business-class airfare, five-star hotels in the heart of Paris and Milan, and experience a turnkey itinerary designed by All World Travel, one of Albuquerque’s premier luxury travel agencies.

The journey combines expert planning with the freedom to explore: evenings at the world’s most important opera houses (after Opera Southwest, of course), private guided tours, two specially arranged dinners, and first-class train travel between the two cities.

With accommodations, transfers, and performances secured in advance, it’s a concierge-level experience only available to the most discerning traveler.

Tickets: \$100 each

Gala Exclusive: Four ticket bundle for \$300!
Available only on October 11. Just 30 bundles (120 tickets) will be offered at this price.

Drawing: December 31, 2025, during the Opera Southwest New Year’s Eve Concert. Winner need not be present to win.
Full rules available at operasouthwest.org/raffle.

Silent Auction

Item 1

So Fresh and So Clean – Teeth Whitening & Car Wash

At ABQ Teeth Whitening, we take pride in offering advanced professional teeth whitening services using the latest technology. Champion Xpress combines a superior chemical presentation and the latest technology to provide a cleaner vehicle with exceptional customer experience every time.

Valued at: \$233 Starting Bid: \$80

Donated by: ABQ Teeth Whitening & Champion Xpress Car Wash

Item 2

Mariachi's Sarape and Isotopes Tickets

Albuquerque's very own Triple-A community-focused baseball team.

Valued at: \$200 Starting Bid: \$70

Donated by: Albuquerque Isotopes

Item 3

Hot Tub for 2

Betty's remains true to its original concept: to provide Albuquerque residents and visitors with a relaxation and wellness retreat in a professional, welcoming, and friendly spa setting.

Valued at: \$60 Starting Bid: \$20

Donated by: Betty's Bath & Day Spa

Item 4

Advanced Reader Bundle plus \$20

As one of Albuquerque's legacy independent bookstores, we are dedicated to supporting our community and connecting books and readers.

Valued at: \$120 Starting Bid: \$40

Donated by: Bookworks

Item 5

Bosque Brewing Apparel and Gift Card

We seek to cultivate that sense of welcome and belonging by bringing people together over the experience of sharing a great beer and eating a meal.

Valued at: \$100 Starting Bid: \$30

Donated by: Bosque Brewing

Item 6

Case of premium VGS Chateau Potelle Wines

Whether in your home or visiting beautiful wine destinations around the world, you will always find good company with VGS.

Valued at: \$1200 Starting Bid: \$400

Donated by: Dr. Bill Thompson and Sandralee

Item 7

Twenty (20) Admissions to Chatter

Chatter offers virtuosic performances of chamber music in an intimate setting with table seating, a cash bar for wine & beer, and nibbles.

Valued at: \$340 Starting Bid: \$100

Donated by: Chatter

Item 8

Gene Billie Native American Jewelry

Born in Crownpoint, New Mexico, Gene was raised in Nahodishgish, New Mexico on the Navajo Nation and now lives and works in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Self-taught artist for more than twenty years, Gene works with sterling silver, gold, various metals, turquoise, gemstones and other natural metals creating sculptural works and jewelry.

Valued at: \$800 Starting Bid: \$250

Donated by: Gene Billie

Item 9

Brunch and a Movie

The Grove has become Albuquerque's favorite breakfast, brunch and lunch cafe serving up the finest local food, in a fun, casual atmosphere. The Guild is Albuquerque's oldest still-running movie theater since 1966. Eclectic cinema seven days a week.

Valued at: \$60 Starting Bid: \$20

Donated by: The Grove & Guild Cinema

Item 10

Handmade Quilt

A modern quilt shop where creativity meets community.

Valued at: \$300 Starting Bid: \$105

Donated by: Hip Stitch

Item 11

One-on-One Makeup Session

Opera Southwest's own Jacqueline Chavez is not just a makeup artist and hair stylist; she's a creative powerhouse who transforms ordinary moments into extraordinary experiences.

Valued at: \$300 Starting Bid: \$100

Donated by: JC and Co

Item 12

One-on-One Makeup Session

Opera Southwest's own Jacqueline Chavez is not just a makeup artist and hair stylist; she's a creative powerhouse who transforms ordinary moments into extraordinary experiences.

Valued at: \$300 Starting Bid: \$100

Donated by: JC and Co

Item 13

Lapis Room Gallery Gifts

Lapis Room is a vibrant art center dedicated to providing thought-provoking and beautiful works of art to the Albuquerque Old Town district.

Valued at: \$200 Starting Bid: \$70

Donated by: Lapis Room

Item 14

Los Poblanos Spa Treatment

The natural beauty, comfort and privacy of Los Poblanos offer our guests a truly relaxing environment.

Valued at: \$190 Starting Bid: \$60

Donated by: Los Poblanos

Item 15

NM United Jersey and Tickets

We are New Mexico, United. We are New Mexico's professional soccer team, changing the game through the beautiful game.

Valued at: \$200 Starting Bid: \$70

Donated by: NM United

Item 16

“Orogenesis” series by Carol Klimek

Abstract arts is a window into the soul of the artist.

Valued at: \$950 Starting Bid: \$300

Donated by: Orogenesis 1 - Carol Klimek

Item 17

“Orogenesis” series by Carol Klimek

Abstract arts is a window into the soul of the artist.

Valued at: \$950 Starting Bid: \$300

Donated by: Orogenesis 2. - Carol Kline

Item 18

Valentine's Day at Popejoy

Popejoy hosts touring Broadway shows, symphony concerts, musical soloists and artists of international caliber; world-renowned ballet and modern dance companies, and noted speakers from a broad spectrum of disciplines.

Valued at: \$100 Starting Bid: \$35

Donated by: Popejoy

Item 19

Steak Dinner at Ruth's Chris

Welcome to Ruth's Chris, where our dedicated team is committed to crafting for you an extraordinary dining experience unlike anything else.

Valued at: \$100 Starting Bid: \$35

Donated by: Ruth's Chris Steakhouse

Item 20

Two Roundtrip Flights

Rising from the hustle and bustle of Albuquerque, you ascend one of America's most stunning urban peaks

Valued at: \$64 Starting Bid: \$20

Donated by: Sandia Peak Tramway

Item 21

Gentleman's Starter Kit

Lady Huntington's Cigar & Pipe Lounge in ABQ is First Responder Owned, Deep Appreciation for our veterans, Renfaires, Pool Tables, Darts, Whiskey Lover. Shaggy & Slicks is located in the heart of Old Town, owners Brian and Kate East have a dream to bring the best shaving and beard products to one place, for everyone!

Valued at: \$120 Starting Bid: \$50

Donated by: Lady Huntington's Fine Pipes and Pouches & Shaggy and Slicks

Item 22

Albuquerque Cooking Class

Whether you're new to baking or looking to sharpen your skills, you'll leave with knowledge, great memories, and fresh bread in hand.

Valued at: \$190 Starting Bid: \$60

Donated by: Sherwood Coffee & Bread

Item 23

Get Toned with Pilates

Somos Pilates is a joyful, inclusive studio where Pilates is for every body.

Valued at: \$250 Starting Bid: \$90

Donated by: Somos Pilates

Item 24

St. James Tearoom at Home

Tea set from the St. James Tearoom. Providing a fine dining experience for over 21 years, transporting guests to a realm of dining elegance, excellence, and creativity.

Valued at: \$50 Starting Bid: \$20

Donated by: St James Tea Room

Item 25

“Sweet Pea” by Carol Klimek

Abstract arts is a window into the soul of the artist.

Valued at: \$695 Starting Bid: \$250

Donated by: Sweet Pea 1 - Carol Klimek

Item 26

Tablao Flamenco Matinee

Through a unique partnership based on cultural preservation, Heritage Hotels and Resorts and the nonprofit National Institute of Flamenco (501c3) have joined efforts to create Tablao Flamenco Alburquerque.

Valued at: \$120 Starting Bid: \$40

Donated by: Tablao Flamenco

Item 27

\$50 to Top Golf

We’ve got lots of stuff that makes us golf: clubs, balls, tees, turf, a ball-picker-upper-cart thing, etc. We also have lots of stuff that’s not golf: loud music, giant targets, giant TVs, and hand-crafted food & drinks.

Valued at: \$50 Starting Bid: \$20

Donated by: Top Golf

Item 28

Wine Tasting for 20: Pick your theme!

Total Wine & More is America’s Wine Superstore® — the country’s largest independent retailer of fine wine.

Valued at: \$600 Starting Bid: \$200

Donated by: Total Wine and More

Item 29

\$100 to Tula’s Kitchen

Tula’s Kitchen is a casual restaurant serving authentic scratch-made, crave-worthy dishes in a modern, comfortable environment.

Valued at: \$100 Starting Bid: \$35

Donated by: Tula’s Kitchen

Item 30

Lobo Basketball with Parking

The Lobo Club is a non-profit organization that raises funds necessary to provide financial support for student-athlete scholarships, facilities, programs.

Valued at: \$100 Starting Bid: \$35

Donated by: UNM Lobo Club

Item 31

Vernon's Speakeasy

Dive into an era gone by and step into the mysterious allure of Vernon's Speakeasy. Hidden in plain sight, we're not just a restaurant; we're an experience reminiscent of the roaring 1920s.

Valued at: \$300 Starting Bid: \$100

Donated by: Vernon's Speakeasy

Item 32

Viva Vino! NM Wine Basket

New Mexico has been in the wine game since 1629. We love sharing these wines with locals and visitors alike, whether you're a wine pro or just curious to try something new.

Valued at: \$165 Starting Bid: \$60

Donated by: New Mexico Wine Studio & Stuck Lizard Winery

Item 33

Premium Wine and Spirits

Your Albuquerque Source for Wine, Spirits, and Craft Beers

Valued at: \$185 Starting Bid: \$65

Donated by: Jubilation Wine & Spirits

Item 34

Weekend BMW Rental

Sandia BMW always has an eye out for the best interests of drivers in Albuquerque, Sandia, and Rio Rancho. We're happy to bring BMW models to local motorists as the brand continues to produce elegant and high-performance options.

Valued at: \$600 Starting Bid: \$200

Donated by: Sandia BMW

Item 35

Hotel Chaco Staycation

Heritage Hotels & Resorts, Inc embodies the culture, spirit, and traditions of New Mexico

Valued at: \$900 Starting Bid: \$300

Donated by: Heritage Hotel

Item 36

Explore El Paso

Stay at the hotel that represents the soul of downtown El Paso. For more than 100 years, the cultural tapestry of our city has been woven in, through and around the Hotel Paso del Norte, Autograph Collection. Join us to experience our inventive breakfast, lunch, brunch, and dinner menus, or indulge in the most magnetic Happy Hour in El Paso. The mission of El Paso Opera is to harness the transformative power of our art to engage with the local and larger community as a lasting and valued cultural service.

Valued at: \$565 Starting Bid: \$200

Donated by: Hotel Paso Del Norte, Taft-Diaz (Stanton House) & El Paso Opera

Item 37

Delightful Durango

Hop aboard and relive the “Golden Age” on our railroad, A National Historic Landmark that’s truly a unique experience for all. Durango’s history comes alive at The Historic Strater Hotel

Valued at: \$507 Starting Bid: \$200

Donated by: Durango and Silverton Railroad & the Strater Hotel

Item 38

Santa Fe Sunsets

Geronimo is the recipient of the AAA Four Diamond and Mobil/Forbes 4 Star Awards. Voted Opentable “Top 100 Restaurants in the Country” and TripAdvisor “Top 10 Restaurants in the US”. As you step through the doors of Palace Modern, we hope that our reverence for the history of this place is immediately evident. We are honored to have become custodians of this very special piece of Santa Fe’s history.

Valued at: \$450 Starting Bid: \$200

Donated by: Geronimo Santa Fe, Santa Fe Brewing Co. & Palace Modern

Item 39

Swings and Hot Springs

Riverbend Hot Springs is the one and only hot springs resort on the banks of the Rio Grande. Beautiful views and an unmatched ambiance awaits. Plus! Enjoy a round of golf at a premiere Southern New Mexico resort home to the New Mexico Open Championship Golf Course.

Valued at: \$304 Starting Bid: \$100

Donated by: Riverbend Hot Springs & Turtleback Mountain Golf and Resort



Winner's Choice - Caribbean for 4

Live Auction Lot #1

Choose either a stay in a boutique two-bedroom beach view villa in the Garifuna village of Hopkins, Belize or an all-inclusive stay in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic in a family duplex.

-
- Hopkins Belize
 - 5-night stay in a two bedroom unit in Hopkins Bay
 - Complementary kayaks, paddleboards, and bicycles
 - Day trip to Thatch Caye for a private island experience
 - Dominican Delight – Punta Cana
 - 4-night stay in a family duplex for up to 4 guests
 - All buffet and a la carte meals, snacks, and select beverages included
 - In-room minibar all beverages included
 - Booking and concierge services included.

Winners have 24 months to travel. Winners are responsible for taxes, travel costs, and personal expenses, security deposits, and resort fees if applicable. Blackout dates are weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years day, and 2 weeks of Spring Break in March



Colorado River Cabin For Up to 10

Live Auction Lot #2

One week in a 3 Bedroom, 2 Bath, deluxe cabin that sleeps 8-10 people, with beautiful views and direct access to Conejos River!

.....

- This incredible 1,200 square feet cabin has beautiful views and direct access to the Conejos River, the area's most pristine trout fishing waterway and well-known to outdoor enthusiasts. Located near Antonito, Colorado, 2.75 hours from Albuquerque in a gated community called Bear Creek.
- The cabin has one main level bedroom (king bed) and an upstairs loft with two distinct sleeping areas on either side of the upstairs half-bath. One side includes a queen bed, while the other side includes 2 sets of bunk beds with trundles, which can sleep six in twins.
- There is direct river access and frontage from the cabin property via a well-kept trail from the deck leading down to the river.
- The cabin is just a short drive to Chama to the west, with the amazing views of the Cumbres Pass, Antonito and the Toltec Scenic railroad to the east. So much exploring and adventuring to be had here! The community also has a stocked pond for kids that is a 10-minute walk from the cabin. The cabin is pet-friendly for well-behaved fur-kids.
- Scheduled at a mutually agreeable date and time.

Donor

Jonathan and Jessica St. Cyr



Musicale - *Aida*

Live Auction Lot #3

Two-for-one! Olivia Vote and Matthew Hanscom delight and entertain in your own home!

.....

- Make your next event an unforgettable experience for you and your guests! Picture a romantic evening in your own home with guests of your choice, to celebrate an exclusive performance. An Opera Southwest Musicale experience is unparalleled as a lasting memory for you and those lucky enough to receive your invitation!
- Together onstage, Olivia Vote and Matthew Hanscom offer a pairing of magnetic vocal artistry and dramatic presence. Olivia, who joined the Metropolitan Opera roster in 2018, has earned praise for her “theatrical magnetism” and “big, rich voice,” bringing depth and nuance to roles from *Rigoletto* to *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Matthew Hanscom, a seasoned baritone with more than 150 operatic performances under his belt, has been lauded for his versatility, whether commanding the stage as *Figaro* or imbuing lyric roles with emotional texture and strength. Together, they transform a recital into an operatic encounter, a rare blend of intimacy and power you won’t want to miss.
- Scheduled at a mutually agreeable date and time while performers are in residence for rehearsals and performances, between February 1-28, 2026.

Donor
Opera Southwest



Sarasota Opera with the Maestro

Live Auction Lot #4

A March weekend for Two in Florida's Cultural Coast - Sarasota, to see both a performance of "Il Trovatore" on Saturday followed by Maestro Barrese conducting "The Merry Widow" on Sunday. Friday March 6 – Monday March 9, 2026



- See *Il Trovatore* on Saturday evening, March 10th, followed by watching Maestro Barrese conducting *The Merry Widow* on Sunday afternoon.
- While in Sarasota, the two of you will enjoy an intimate dinner in the company of Maestro Anthony Barrese, for a memorable evening.
- Three-night accommodations at Aloft Sarasota in the heart of downtown, conveniently located 3 blocks from the Sarasota Opera House

Donor

Maestro Anthony Barrese, Sarasota Opera, Mimi Hatch



Musicale *Mose in Egitto*

Live Auction Lot #5

A private performance by Ashley Milanese, in your own home!

.....

- Make your next event an unforgettable experience as you host your hand-selected guests at a dazzling event in your own home. You'll be transported back in time to the spirit of the traditional salons associated with French culture in the 17th and 18th centuries when people gathered under the roof of an inspiring host to amuse one another and refine their taste and knowledge.
- A rising star soprano whose voice has been called “more convincing dramatically and vocally than any I have seen on international stages” by Opera Magazine. With a soaring lyric line capable of “heart-stopping soft effects”, she has sung at the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro Regio Torino, Komische Oper Berlin, Opera Philadelphia, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and more.
- Scheduled at a mutually agreeable date and time while performers are in residence for rehearsals and performances, between March 30 and April 26, 2026.

Donor

Opera Southwest



Mill on the Seine for 6

Live Auction Lot #6

Discover an extraordinary escape where heritage meets luxury on the banks of the Seine. This meticulously restored 19th-century mill offers an intimate retreat for six discerning guests, combining authentic French charm with modern indulgences.

.....

- 7-Night Stay for three couples in a 19th century restored mill house in Burgundy, France
- Perched on the banks of the Seine River, the three-bedroom house includes two living rooms, a spacious kitchen, and a peaceful garden with hot tub and sauna
- Dinner at Michelin starred Chateau de Courban of Chef Nicholas Thomas (alcohol and gratuity not included)
- Case of local wine delivered to the house
- Booking and concierge services included.

Winners have 24 months to travel. Winners are responsible for taxes, travel costs, and personal expenses, security deposits, and resort fees if applicable.



Malaga Spain for 4

Live Auction Lot #7

Immerse yourself in the soul of Andalucía from your private penthouse perch above Málaga's storied streets. This exclusive five-night escape for four offers a perfect blend of historic grandeur and modern luxury, mere steps from Pablo Picasso's birthplace.

-
- 5-Night in a luxury penthouse accommodation
 - Your journey through Málaga's rich heritage begins with a private walking tour, where expert guides unveil the city's most treasured landmarks. From the remarkably preserved 10th-century castle to the Roman amphitheater's ancient stones, each step reveals another layer of this city's fascinating story.
 - As evening descends, prepare to be mesmerized by the passionate artistry of flamenco at the renowned Tablao Flamenco Los Amaya. This UNESCO-recognized art form comes alive through an unforgettable performance that captures the very essence of Andalusian soul.
 - Booking and concierge services included.

Winners have 24 months to travel. Winners are responsible for taxes, travel costs, and personal expenses, security deposits, and resort fees if applicable.

*Thank you to the
Gala Committee*

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Sandy Donaldson
Alaric Babej
Esther Babej
Joan Punt
Paulette Stevenson
Jacqueline Hockey

Mary Nuñez
Paul Strasser
Sara Bolden
& all our volunteers this
evening!

Most of all...

.....

**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
SUPPORT!**

*Making your contribution to support
Opera Southwest or paying for silent
auction purchases is easy!
Just scan this QR Code →.*



Music

Alex Boyer tenor
Brian Cheney tenor
Rolfe Daux baritone
Kelly Guerra mezzo-soprano
Sergio Martinez bass-baritone

Tessa Hartle piano

Charles Gounod *from FAUST*

Sérénade (Vous qui faites...)

Nicolás Lell Benavides & Marella Martin Koch *from DOLORES*

God Protect My Family

Giacomo Puccini *from LA BOHEME*

O Mimì, tu più non torni

Giacomo Puccini *from TOSCA*

E lucevan le stelle...

Georges Bizet *from CARMEN*

La fleur que tu m'avais jetée

Georges Bizet *from CARMEN*

**Près des remparts de Séville
(Seguidilla) & Duet**



2025
INTERNATIONAL
OPERA
AWARDS
FINALIST



Photo: Aziza Murray



opera
SOUTHWEST

