



Elena Villalón Soprano



Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and several prizes at the Hans Gabor Belvedere Competition, 25 year-old Cuban-American soprano Elena Villalón is already attracting major industry attention. A recent alumna of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, her engagements this season include her debut at the Metropolitan Opera New York as Amore in Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and Sheila in the world premiere of Gregory Spears' *The Righteous* at the Santa Fe Opera. As an ensemble member at Oper Frankfurt, Villalón will lead a new production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* as Susanna, as well as making her role debut as Pamina *Die Zauberflöte* and singing Frasquita *Carmen*. Equally prolific in concert, she will sing Handel *Messiah* and the Brahms Requiem with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Bach Christmas Oratorio at the Tiroler Festspiele, and Mahler Symphony No. 2 with the Lubbock Symphony in her native Texas. Villalón will also appear in a Winter Gala at the Santa Fe Opera, and compete in the prestigious Operalia competition, hosted this year in Johannesburg.

Recent engagements include house and role debuts at The Dallas Opera as Tina *Flight* and Gretel *Hansel und Gretel*, at Austin Opera as Susanna *Le nozze di Figaro*, Nannetta *Falstaff* with the Santa Fe Opera, as well as continued collaborations with Houston Grand Opera, where she performed Susanna, created the role of Amy in the world premiere of Thompson *The Snowy Day* and debuted the role of Juliette *Roméo et Juliette*. She also joined forces with The English Concert and Harry Bicket as the Queen of Sheba in an international tour of Handel *Solomon*, and sung Iole in a new Barrie Kosky production of *Hercules* as well as Atalanta *Xerxes*, both at Oper Frankfurt.

In concert she has appeared as the emerging artist recitalist with Vocal Arts DC, collaborating with Kathleen Kelly at the Kennedy Center, as the soprano soloist in Orff *Carmina Burana* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Poulenc *Gloria* with the Grand Rapids Symphony and Handel *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* with Boston Baroque. Passionate about art song and concert repertoire, Villalón has spent summers at the Tanglewood Music Center and at Songfest in Los Angeles as a Colburn Fellow. At Tanglewood, performance highlights included the soprano solo in Mahler Symphony No. 4 with conductor Giancarlo Guerrero, Max in Oliver Knussen *Where the Wild Things Are*, the world premiere of Michael Gandolfi *In America*, concerts of Bach cantatas conducted by John Harbison, and concerts and recitals curated by Dawn Upshaw, Stephanie Blythe, Margo Garrett, and Sanford Sylvan. She has also appeared with Cincinnati Song Initiative and at the Rienzi Museum of Fine Arts as part of a studio recital series, and was featured in a concert of baroque cantatas and arias with the Mercury Chamber Orchestra.

As a studio member of the Houston Grand Opera she performed in digital collaborations including David T. Little's *Vinkensport* and *Hansel und Gretel*, as well as a digital Studio Showcase, performing in scenes as Sophie *Werther*, the title role in *Lulu*, and Poppea *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. In performance at HGO, she performed the role of Inés in Kevin Newbery's new production of *La Favorite*, La Mujer in the world premiere of Javier Martinez's *El Milagro de Recuerdo*, and understudied Pamina *Die Zauberflöte* and Michal *Saul*.

A native of Austin, Texas, Elena Villalón is an alumnus of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and made her professional debut as a Gerdine Young Artist at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, where she performed the role of Barbarina *Le Nozze di Figaro* and later returned for Lauretta *Gianni Schicchi*. A 2019 Grand Finals winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, she recently took home several prizes in the Hans Gabor Belvedere Competition, including 2nd Prize, Audience Prize, CS Prize, and the Wil Keune Prize, a 2022 Sara Tucker Career Grant from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation, and the Richard F. Gold career grant from Houston Grand Opera.

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