



Elena Villalón Soprano



Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, several prizes at the Hans Gabor Belvedere Competition and third Prize and the Audience Prize at the Operalia competition 2023, 26-year-old Cuban American soprano Elena Villalón is already attracting major industry attention. An alumna of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, the 2024-25 season sees Villalón make two major appearances in New York: as Nuria in the highly anticipated Metropolitan Opera premiere of Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* and solo recital debut at Carnegie Hall with pianist Craig Terry. She also returns to Santa Fe as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, makes her debuts as Almirena *Rinaldo* at Detroit Opera and the title role of Rodelinda at Oper Frankfurt, where she can also be heard as Susanna *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Sophie *Der Rosenkavalier*. Future engagements see her making her company debuts with the Royal Ballet & Opera, Opera de Paris, Staatsoper Berlin, Glyndebourne Festival to name a few.

Her engagements last season included 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 led 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*. In concert, she sang Mahler *Symphony No. 4* under James Gaffigan and the Boston Symphony Orchestra for Tanglewood Music Festival, 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 also appeared in a Winter Gala at the Santa Fe Opera.

Other recent engagements include Tina *Flight* and Gretel *Hansel und Gretel* both at Dallas Opera; Susanna *Le nozze di Figaro* at Austin Opera; Nannetta *Falstaff* in Santa Fe; Susanna and the world premiere of Thompson *The Snowy Day* at Houston Grand Opera; Iole in a new Barrie Kosky production of *Hercules* as well as Atalanta *Xerxes* at Oper Frankfurt; and an international tour of Handel *Solomon* as the Queen of Sheba together with The English Concert and Harry Bicket.

In concert she has appeared as the emerging artist recitalist with Vocal Arts DC, collaborating with Kathleen Kelly at the Kennedy Center; 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.

A native of Austin, Texas, Elena Villalón is an alumna 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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