

About our Program

When we think of women in opera, so often we encounter heroines who are powerless in the face of fate. Violetta and Mimì waste away from consumption. Gilda, Juliette, Tosca, Butterfly, and Aida are manipulated, betrayed, or destroyed by forces outside their control. Their stories are unforgettable, but they also reflect the long tradition of women in opera being defined by tragedy, sacrifice, or victimhood.

In this program, we turn the spotlight toward a different kind of operatic heroine — the rare gems who defy expectations and claim their own destiny. These women are not trapped by circumstance; they choose for themselves. This concert is a celebration of their courage, their power, their wit, their brilliance, their freedom and their music.

Special Thanks

The Texas Concert Opera Collective extends heartfelt gratitude to Betty Edwards and the Hallettsville Cultural Events Center for their generous collaboration and support in presenting Women of Opera: Defining Their Own Fate. Your partnership, vision, and commitment to the arts make it possible to share the power and beauty of live music with the community.

About Texas Concert Opera Collective (TCOC)

The Texas Concert Opera Collective (TCOC) is a dynamic ensemble of professional singers and musicians dedicated to bringing high-quality opera performances to communities across Texas. Founded on the belief that opera should be both accessible and artistically excellent, TCOC collaborates with regional artists, venues, and organizations to present engaging concert productions and educational outreach events. The Collective's mission is to celebrate the power of the human voice, foster local talent, and connect audiences to opera's timeless stories through innovative and collaborative programming.

Thank you to our Sponsors!



HALLETTSVILLE CULTURAL EVENTS CENTER
in collaboration with
TEXAS CONCERT OPERA COLLECTIVE
presents

WOMEN OF OPERA: DEFINING THEIR OWN FATE



ELIZABETH HERLITZ CORTES, *soprano*
BRITTNEE SIMONE, *soprano*
OLIVIA GRONENTHAL, *mezzo-soprano*
MUSIC DIRECTOR: DOTTIE RANDALL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2025 | 2:00 PM
FREE ADMISSION

HALLETTSVILLE CULTURAL EVENTS CENTER
115 N MAIN STREET, HALLETTSVILLE, TX 77964

About the Artists



DOTTIE RANDALL, OPERA San Antonio's Chorus master and pianist, is a native San Antonian. She has also served on the music staff of Chautauqua Opera, and collaborated with opera companies in San Diego, New Orleans, Austin, Des Moines, Orlando and Hawaii Opera, as well as the renowned Arena di Verona in Italy and the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. As an educator, Dottie has worked with singers in the CMI/Opera San Antonio young artist program, and Spotlight on Opera, in addition to maintaining an active vocal coaching studio.

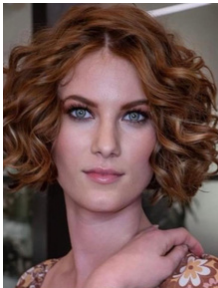
Soprano, **ELIZABETH HERLITZ CORTES** is the Founder and General Director of the Texas Concert Opera Collective, where she leads artistic collaborations and fundraising initiatives that bring world-class opera to communities across Texas. A dedicated advocate for the arts, she has directed major fundraising efforts for opera companies and cultural organizations, connecting donors, artists, and audiences through the shared power of music. Recent engagements include performances with Opera Philadelphia, Opera San Antonio, Opera Louisiana, and Spotlight on Opera.



This season, mezzo-soprano **OLIVIA GRONENTHAL** brings her dramatic intensity and vocal agility to the title role of Elizabeth Cree by Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell. Recent performances include Kate Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly with OPERA San Antonio and Austin Opera, and the Super Fan in Nathan Felix's Glory Gone. As a Lakes Area Music Festival resident artist, she covered Hänsel in Hänsel und Gretel and appeared as an orchestral soloist. A fearless interpreter of new and psychologically complex works, she has premiered roles in Anne Frank and New Motive Power and holds degrees from the University of Illinois and Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music.



Soprano, **BRITTNEE SIMONE** is from Houston, Texas and received both her Bachelors in Music Education and Masters in Vocal Performance at Stephen F. Austin State University. She recently moved to San Antonio where she teaches high school voice lessons. She currently sings with the San Antonio Choral Society, where she was the Messiah Soprano Soloist, and the chorus of Opera San Antonio.



WOMEN IN OPERA: Defining Their Own Fate

Stridono lassu' from I PAGLIACCI by Ruggero Leoncavallo
Elizabeth Herlitz Cortes, soprano

Kommt ein schlanker Bursch from DIE FREISCHUTZ by Carl Maria von Weber
Brittnee Simone, soprano

Prendero' quel brunettino from COSI FAN TUTTE by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Olivia Gronenthal, mezzo-soprano
Brittnee Simone, soprano

Faites-lui mes aveux from FAUST by Charles Gounod
Ms. Gronenthal

Quando m'en vo from LA BOHEME by Giacomo Puccini
Ms. Cortes

Simple Child from THE GRAPES OF WRATH by Ricky Ian Gordon
Ms. Gronenthal

Spogliati, bambolino from GIANNI SCHICCHI by Giacomo Puccini
Ms. Simone
Ms. Cortes
Ms. Gronenthal

Melons! Coupons! from CARMEN by Georges Bizet
Ms. Gronenthal
Ms. Simone
Ms. Cortes

Deh vieni, non tardar from LE NOZZE DI FIGARO by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Ms. Simone

Klänge der Heimat from DIE FLEDERMAUS by Johann Strauss II
Ms. Cortes

We are Women from CANDIDE by Leonard Bernstein
Ms. Simone
Ms. Gronenthal