

FRIDA

Composed by Robert Xavier Rodríguez
Lyrics by Migdalia Cruz | Book by Hilary Blecher

20 - 21 SEASON

DIGITAL PROGRAM / PORTLAND OPERA PREMIERE: JUNE 22, 2021

June 22, 24, 26 & 27, 2021
Jordan Schnitzer CARE Summerstage
at OMSI museum campus

PORTLAND OPERA



The opera & company:

FRIDA

Composed by Robert Xavier Rodríguez
 Libretto by Hilary Blecher, Migdalia Cruz
 In Two Acts

June 22, 24, 26, 27

Conductor
 Stage Director & Production Designer
 Lighting Designer
 Sound Designer
 Assistant Conductor
 Principal Accompanist
 Production Stage Manager
 Assistant Director

Andrés Cladera *
 Andreas Mitisek
 Carl Faber
 Brian Mohr
 Nicholas Fox
 Sequoia
 Jon Wangsgard
 Eric Lyness *

The Cast

(in order of vocal appearance)

Calaveras/Cristina Kahlo/Mrs. Ford
 Calaveras/Lupe Marin/Mrs. Rockefeller/Natalia Trotsky
 Calaveras/Alejandro/Mr. Ford/Barker/Leon Trotsky
 Calaveras/Guillermo Kahlo/Mr. Rockefeller/E.G. Robinson
 Frida Kahlo
 Diego Rivera

Aline Bahamondez
 Rachel Hauge *
 Joseph Michael Muir
 Adrian Rosales-Casillas *
 Catalina Cuervo *
 Bernardo Bermudez *

Performed in English and Spanish with projected text

Premiere: American Music Theater Festival, Philadelphia, 1991

Portland Opera Premiere: June 22, 2021

* Portland Opera Debut

Costumes and props created by Portland Opera
 Projected English and Spanish surtitles written and produced by Florida Grand Opera.
 Spanish titles created by Dreambay Enterprises for Florida Grand Opera
 Stage structure provided by Stages Northwest, Inc.
 Sound system provided by Carlson Audio Systems
 Video screens and cameras provided by Really Big Video
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There will be no intermission.
 Total running time is approximately 95 minutes.

Recording equipment, cameras and personal phones are prohibited.

From General Director Sue Dixon

FRIDA



It is with great joy and excitement that I welcome you to Portland Opera's premiere of *Frida*! We are all delighted to be able to perform for a live audience for the first time since February 2020.

So much has happened in the last 16 months. This has been a difficult time for our community, and our arts and cultural institutions, so we wanted to lift each other up in partnership. We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with our neighbors at OMSI and our friends at Oregon Ballet Theatre to create this safe outdoor performance venue.

We are also excited to share the stage with the talented young dancers of local dance troupe Corazones Alegres Ballet Folklórico. We hope you enjoy their performance as much as we do.

Music is healing. So is gathering together in community. Thank you for joining us tonight to share in the unparalleled experience of live performance. We are grateful for your patronage, your support, and your presence.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sue Dixon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Synopsis:

FRIDA

Sung in both Spanish and English, *Frida* is the story of renowned Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, wife of the country's great muralist Diego Riviera. Her tortured life unfolds in a flowing succession of scenes, acted and sung by two women and two men in a variety of guises—masked or plain-faced—and as two or three dimensional puppets; shadow puppets and projections are also involved. Diego's preoccupation with art and other women shrivel Frida's soul and her demands for love drain him; they need one another desperately. Divorce is imminent. Frida's health deteriorates; only painting permits emotional release, translating her agonies into a series of canvases. Her fate is to live alone, engulfed by pain, but her paintings live forever, reflecting hidden dreams and inspiring courage to transcend conventional boundaries.

ACT I

Scene 1: Mexico City in 1925. Frida and her boyfriend Alejandro board a bus. The bus crashes, Frida is severely injured, begins her life as a painter.

Scene 2: 1927-1929, Frida meets and marries Diego Rivera.

Scene 3: 1929-30. Diego's work is denounced in Mexico. The Riveras resolve to try their luck in the USA.

Scene 4: New York City in 1931. Frida and Diego meet Rockefeller, who commissions the mural Man at the Crossroads.

Scene 5: 1932. Rockefeller complains about including Lenin in the mural. The mural is destroyed and Frida miscarries.

ACT II

Scene 1: San Angel, Mexico. Frida ignores the parade of women through Diego's bedroom, but is horrified to discover her sister, Cristina, among them.

Scene 2: San Angel, Mexico 1937. Leon Trotsky and his wife join the Riveras in their house. Frida and Trotsky have a love affair.

Scene 3: Frida's Bath. Frida retreats to the seclusion of her bath and the comfort of female lovers.

Scene 4: New York. Frida has a love affair with photographer Nicholas Murray and sells her first paintings. Frida and Diego divorce.

Scene 5: Calaveras (Mexican death figures) appear in Frida's imagination as she is haunted by her physical and emotional pain.

Scene 6: Finale - In delirium, Frida relives episodes of her life. Diego and Frida remarry. She departs with a cry of "Viva, la vida...alegría...and Diego."

Courtesy of Long Beach Opera

The orchestra:

FRIDA

Violin

Margaret Bichteler, Concertmaster

Clarinet/Saxophone

Jennifer Nelson

Trumpet/Flugelhorn

Charles Butler

Percussion

Gordon Rencher

Accordion Keyboard

Nicholas Fox

Piano

Sequoia

Meet members of the Portland Opera Orchestra by visiting:
portlandopera.org/about/people

SPECIAL THANKS

This production was made possible by Carol Franc Buck Foundation, Jordan Schnitzer & The Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), TriMet, and Orox Leather Co.

Portland Opera also appreciates the ongoing support of our generous donors, The National Endowment for the Arts, The Collins Foundation, James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Community Foundation, Regional Arts and Culture Council, including support from the City of Portland, Multnomah County, and the Arts Education & Access Fund, and special support from The CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund.

Consider making a gift to Portland Opera. Learn more at
portlandopera.org/support

About the artists:

FRIDA



Aline Bahamondez

Calaveras, Cristina Kahlo, and Mrs. Ford

Pronouns

she/her/hers

Hometown:

Hillsboro, Oregon

Portland Opera Debut:

The Page, *Rigoletto*, 2018

Recent Credits:

Chorus, Portland Opera, 2009-2021; Soloist, Brahms Requiem, Choral Arts Ensemble of Portland

Upcoming Performances:

Soloist, An Evening with the Portland Opera Orchestra, Portland Opera; Chorus, *Tosca*, Portland Opera

Bernardo Bermudez

Diego Rivera

Pronouns

he/him/his

Hometown:

San Diego, California

Portland Opera Debut

Recent Credits:

Diego Rivera, *Frida*, Long Beach Opera and Anchorage Opera; El Dancairo, *Carmen* and A Messenger, *Aida*, San Diego Opera; Mario's Father, *Il Postino* for Opera Santa Barbara

Upcoming Performances:

Series of concerts for San Diego Opera in 2021, Woodsman/Fox, *The Enchanted Tail*, Opera4Kids; A messenger and Radames Cover, *Aida*, Sociedad Artística Sinaloense Mexico in 2022



About the artists:

FRIDA



Andrés Cladera

Conductor

Pronouns

he/him/his

Hometown:

Montevideo, Uruguay

Portland Opera Debut

Recent Credits:

Pianist, Ben Gulley Concert, Dallas Opera; Conductor, Summer Concert, Steamboat Symphony Orchestra; Conductor, *Rusalka*, Opera Steamboat

Upcoming Performances:

Pianist, Concert with Ben Gulley, Brussels Symphony Hall; Pianist Concert with Michelle DeYoung, Amsterdam Symphony Hall; Conductor, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Opera Steamboat

Catalina Cuervo

Frida

Pronouns

she/her/hers

Hometown:

Miami, Florida

Portland Opera Debut

Recent Credits:

Nedda, *Pagliacci*, Opera in Williamsburg; Frida, *Frida*, Anchorage Opera; Frida, *Frida*, Cincinnati Opera

Upcoming Performances:

Frida, *Frida*, Michigan Opera Theater; Frida, *Frida*, El Paso Opera; Musetta, *La Bohème*, Opera in Williamsburg



About the artists:

FRIDA



Carl Faber

Lighting Designer

Pronouns

he/him/his

Hometown:

Portland, Oregon

Portland Opera Debut:

Assistant Lighting Designer, *La Bohème*, 2017

Recent Credits:

Lighting Designer, *The Last Five Years*, Broadway
Rose Theatre Company

Upcoming Performances:

Lighting Designer, *Analog & Vinyl*, Broadway Rose

Rachel Hauge

Calaveras/Lupe Marin/
Mrs. Rockefeller/Natalia Trotsky

Pronouns

she/her/hers

Hometown:

Corvallis, Oregon

Portland Opera Debut

Recent Credits:

Suzuki, *Madama Butterfly*, Deutsche Oper Berlin;
2nd Twin, *The Canterville Ghost*, Oper Leipzig;
Linetta, *L'amour des trois oranges*, Deutsche Oper
Berlin



About the artists:

FRIDA



Andreas Mitisek

Director & Production Designer

Hometown:

Long Beach, California

Portland Opera Debut:

Conductor, Director, Production, & Video Designer, *As One*, 2019

Recent Credits:

Director, video/production designer, commissioner, *The Central Park Five*, Long Beach Opera; Director, Production/video designer, new libretto, *King Arthur*, Long Beach Opera; Director, Production & Video Designer, *Frida*, Anchorage Opera

Brian Mohr

Sound Designer

Pronouns

he/him/his

Hometown:

Palo Alto, California

Portland Opera Debut:

Sound Designer, *Nixon in China*, 2006

Recent Credits:

Sound Designer, Fear No Music 20/21 digital season; Sound Designer, *Journeys to Justice*, Portland Opera

Upcoming Performances:

Sound Designer, Ongoing seasons with Kronos Quartet and Sun Valley Music Festival



About the artists:

FRIDA



Joseph Michael Muir
 Calaveras/Alejandro/
 Mr. Ford/Barker/Leon Trotsky

Pronouns

he/him/his

Hometown:

Upland, California

Portland Opera Debut:

2nd Priest, *The Magic Flute*, 2016

Recent Credits:

Gas Station Attendant, *Night Trip* (Journeys to Justice), Portland Opera

Upcoming Performances:

Chorus, *Tosca*, Portland Opera

Adrian Rosales-Casillas
 Calaveras/Guillermo Kahlo/
 Mr. Rockefeller/E.G. Robinson

Pronouns

he/him/his

Hometown:

Aloha, Oregon

Portland Opera Debut

Recent Credits

Schaunard, *La Bohème*, Tacoma Opera; Figaro, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Social Distance Opera; William Dale, *Silent Night*, Opera San José

Upcoming Performances:

Chorus, *Tosca*, Portland Opera



The composers & librettists:

FRIDA

Robert Xavier Rodríguez, composer

Robert Xavier Rodríguez is “one of the major American composers of his generation” (Texas Monthly). His music has been described as “Romantically dramatic” (Washington Post), “richly lyrical” (Musical America) and “glowing with a physical animation and delicate balance of moods that combine seductively with his all-encompassing sense of humor” (Los Angeles Times). “Its originality lies in the telling personality it reveals. His music always speaks and speaks in the composer’s personal language.” (American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters). Rodríguez has written in all genres – opera, orchestral, concerto, ballet, vocal, choral, chamber, solo and music for the theater—but he has been drawn most strongly in recent years to works for the stage, including music for children.



Rodríguez received his early musical education in San Antonio (b. 1946) and in Austin (UT), Los Angeles (USC), Lenox (Tanglewood), Fontainebleau (Conservatoire Américain) and Paris. His teachers have included Nadia Boulanger, Jacob Druckman, Bruno Maderna and Elliott Carter. Rodríguez first gained international recognition in 1971, when he was awarded the *Prix de Composition Musicale Prince Pierre de Monaco* by Prince Rainier and Princess Grace at the *Palais Princier* in Monte Carlo. Other honors include the *Prix Lili Boulanger*, a Guggenheim Fellowship, awards from ASCAP and the Rockefeller Foundation, five NEA grants and the Goddard Lieberman Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Rodríguez has served as Composer-in-Residence with the San Antonio Symphony and the Dallas Symphony. He currently holds the Endowed Chair of University Professor at The University of Texas at Dallas, where he is Director of the *Musica Nova* ensemble. He is active as a guest lecturer and conductor.

Rodríguez’ music has been performed by conductors such as Sir Neville Marriner, Antal Dorati, Eduardo Mata, James DePriest, Sir Raymond Leppard, Keith Lockhart and Leonard Slatkin. His work has received over 2000 professional orchestral and operatic performances in recent seasons by such organizations as the Vienna Schauspielhaus, The National Opera of Mexico, New York City Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, American Repertory Theater, American Music Theater Festival (now Prince Music Theater), Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, The Aspen Music Festival, The Juilliard Focus and Summergarden Series, The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Mexico City Philharmonic, Toronto Radio Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, The Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony, and Cleveland Orchestra. Rodriguez’ chamber works have been performed in London, Paris, Dijon, Monte Carlo, Berlin, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Edinburgh, The Hague and other musical centers. His music is published exclusively by [G. Schirmer](http://www.gschirmer.com/) and is recorded on the Newport, Crystal, Orion, Gasparo, Pro Arte, ACA, Urtext, CRI (Grammy nomination), First Edition, Schott, Naxos and Albany labels. Learn more at: <http://www.robertxavierrodriguez.com/>

The composers & librettists:

FRIDA



Migdalia Cruz, librettist

Migdalia Cruz is an award-winning playwright who has written more than sixty plays, operas, screenplays, and musicals. Her work has been produced across the U.S. and abroad at various venues including: Mabou Mines, Classic Stage Company, Playwrights Horizons, INTAR, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Monarch Theater, En-Garde Arts, HOME, Shaliko Company, New York Shakespeare Festival's Festival Latino, Theatre For The New City, and the W.O.W. Cafe (New York); Ateneo Puertorriqueño (PR); National Theater of Greece (Athens); Foro Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz (Mexico City); Old Red Lion (London, England); Vancouver Players (Vancouver, B.C.); Latino Chicago Theater Company (Chicago); Houston Grand Opera (Houston); American

Repertory Theatre (Cambridge); Cleveland Public Theatre (Cleveland); Frank Theatre (Minneapolis); Théâtre d'aujourd'hui (Montreal); American Music Theatre Festival (Philadelphia); Intersection for the Arts/LATA (San Francisco); and Cornerstone Theater Company (Los Angeles), among others. She has been nurtured by Maria Irene Fornés' Playwrights' Laboratory at INTAR; Royal Court Theatre/New Dramatists Exchange '94 (London); Steppenwolf Theatre's New PlaysLab (Chicago); Bay Area Playwrights' Festival '94, Festival Latino'93 at Teatro Mision (San Francisco); the Sundance Institute; Midwest PlayLabs; Mark Taper Forum's New Play Festival; Omaha Magic Theatre; "Songs from Coconut Hill" Theater Festival '05; South Coast Rep's HPP '04, and was writer-in-residence at Latino Chicago Theater Company from 1991-98.

Her plays include: *Salt, Fur, Miriam's Flowers, Lucy Loves Me, Dreams of Home, Telling Tales, ¡CHE-CHE-CHE!, Latins In La-La Land, Cigarettes and Moby-Dick, Lolita de Lares, Yellow Eyes, and Running For Blood: No. 3* (a radio play). She wrote book and lyrics for the musicals *Rushing Waters, Welcome Back To Salamanca* and *When Galaxy Six and The Bronx Collide*; the libretto for an opera, *Street Sense*; and lyrics and monologues for *Frida: The Story of Frida Kahlo*. She taught playwriting at U.of Iowa/Playwrights' Workshop, NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Princeton University, and at Amherst College, and guest lectured at Yale University, Wesleyan University, Mount Holyoke College, and Columbia University. Migdalia was awarded the 2013 Helen Merrill Distinguished Playwright Award (NYCommTrust), and is a 1996 recipient of the Kennedy Center's Fund for New American Plays award for *Another Part Of The House*. Migdalia was a 1997-98 Sackler Fellow at Connecticut Rep/UConn, a 1991 & 1995 NEA Playwriting Fellow, a 1988 McKnight Fellow, and received her MFA degree from Columbia University. She is an alumna of New Dramatists. She was born and raised in the Bronx. To learn more, visit: <https://www.migdaliacruz.com/>

The book for *Frida* was written by Hilary Blecher.

ABOUT BALLET FOLKLÓRICO



We're thrilled to share the Jordan Schnitzer CARE Summerstage with local dance troupe [Corazones Alegres Ballet Folklórico](#) at performances of *Frida*. Ballet Folklórico is part of Latino Network under the youth empowerment and violence prevention program where they celebrate Mexican culture, heritage, and identity.

These young dancers from the Rockwood area will perform a 20-minute program of dances traditionally from the Mexican state of Veracruz (La Llorona and La Bamba) and the state of Jalisco (La Negra and Las Copetonas). Four guest dancers from Ballet Folklórico Academia Gabriela will also be performing.

Youth learn traditional dances of the various regions while gaining an appreciation for the lyrical, musical and colorful culture and traditions of Mexico. By practicing the movements, Ballet Folklórico youth learn to reveal the story of each dance while developing pride in their heritage, dignity and poise. More details about this organization can be found [here](#).

Dancers:

Valeria Juarez-Sierra

Kalani Ortiz

Kaliah Gatica-Gonzalez

Stephanie Cauich-Hernandez

Isabella Murillo-Gonzalez

Ashley Ayala

Laisha Solis

Danika Montoya-Dominguez

Samantha Garcia-Martinez

Keianna Gatica-Gonzalez

Anahi Santos-Dominguez

Samatha Sierra-Ortiz

Sophia Ramirez-Sanchez

Hayley Dusicka

Fatima Ruiz

Siana Sanchez-Palestino

Production staff

FRIDA

PRODUCTION STAFF

Laura Hassell, *Producing Director*

Production

Jon Wangsgard, *Stage and Production Manager*

Ann Moore, Megan Thorpe, *Assistant Stage Managers*

Carla E. Jimenez, *Production Assistant/Scheduling Specialist*

Amanda K. Cole, *Intimacy Coach*

Artistic Administration

Ethan Cope Richter, *Music Administrator & Librarian*

Kathryn Thompson, *Music Librarian*

Lindsey Johnson, Jasmine Johnson, *Surtitles Operators*

Anders J. Tobiason, Sherrie Van Hine, *AGMA Delegates*

Michael Hettwer, *Orchestra Manager*

Technical

Kyle Spens, *Technical & Production Director*

Cindy Felice, *Props Director*

Jaison Stagg, *Production Carpenter*

Mark James, *Production Electrician*

Jona Stagg, *Warehouse Supervisor*

Sean Casey, Kerris Cockrell, Rayn Jacks, Laura Fraley, Daniel Wilson,
Properties Assistants

Gina Fagnani, *Pre-Production Electrician*

Costumes

Christine A. Richardson, *Costume Director*

Jeffery Wilson, *Tailor / Draper*

Wigs / Makeup

Sara Beukers, *Designer & Supervisor*

Kellon Eason, *Artist*

Portland Opera is grateful for the support and cooperation of the American Guild of Musical Artists, the American Federation of Musicians, Local 99, IATSE Local 28, and our medical advisors for making this project possible.

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 Jeffery Wilson, *Tailor/Draper*

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Libretto by Luigi Illica & Giuseppe Giacosa
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About

PORTLAND OPERA

VISION

We celebrate the power of performance, storytelling, and song as an inclusive artistic leader.

MISSION

We gather and inspire audiences, artists, and collaborators to share opera experiences that enliven and connect us all, enhancing the cultural landscape of the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

VALUES

We realize our mission and vision with a constellation of values that guide our work:

THE ART OF OPERA

We are unapologetically passionate about the live art of opera, and are energized by its roots as the people's art form. We believe in its future. We continue the timeless tradition of storytelling, we celebrate the universal language of music, and we honor the brilliance of the human voice.

ENSEMBLE & CULTURAL EQUITY

Our work relies on being an ensemble, and our ensemble only thrives with diversity, equity, inclusion, and respect. We commit to actively confronting and dismantling white supremacy, patriarchy, and exclusion in our company, field, and community. We commit to being inclusive and strive every day to be an anti-racist organization.

OUR SHARED HUMANITY

We sing stories about experiences, emotions, and moments that matter in life. In this practice we, together with audiences, aim to reveal and gain insight into the human condition—as a reflection of ourselves, and ourselves in relation to each other.

FISCAL STRENGTH & STEWARDSHIP

We are committed to the fiscal health of our organization, and its bright future. We are dedicated financial stewards of the community and the philanthropic funding that makes our work possible.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We generate positive impacts for our community, fostering and co-authoring collaborations and programs to achieve meaningful engagement. We contribute to the civic and cultural life of our region, and amplify the contributions and insights of our peers, colleagues, and partners.

IMAGINATION & THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

We accomplish our work with an enthusiasm to be creative, to innovate and transform, to adapt and collaborate. We hold ourselves and each other accountable to achieve sustainability, increase accessibility, and make space for curiosity in attaining our strategic goals.