

**CASSANDRA ZOE VELASCO**  
**MEZZO-SOPRANO**



A graduate of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program at the Los Angeles Opera mezzo-soprano Cassandra Zoe Velasco is considered one of Mexico's rising stars of opera. Cassandra was a semi-finalist of the 2012 edition of Operalia. Additionally, she represented Mexico at the Monserrat Caballé Competition (Spain), the Competizione dell'Opera (Germany) and the Teatro Colón Competition (Argentina).

From the age of 22, Ms. Velasco has starred in productions in Mexico City, including *La Scala di Seta*, and *L'Ocassione fa il Ladro* with ProOpera, Angelina in *La Cenerentola* and Isolier in *Le Comte Ory* with Mexico National Opera Company, Isabella in *Italiana in Algeri* with Arpeggio Productions, and Charlotte in *Werther* with Festival Frances. She made her Opera de Bellas Artes debut as Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, followed by Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

Engagements for 2018-2019 included Ms. Velasco's return to the Metropolitan Opera for productions of *Iolantha* and *Suor Angelica*, *Carmen* with Annapolis Opera, and her debut as Isabel/ Dolores in *El pasado nunca se termina* with Fort Worth Opera. The 2019-2020 season sees her as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* with Nashville Opera, the cover of Nerone in *Agrippina* with the Metropolitan Opera, and a soloist for Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra.

Ms. Velasco's 2017-2018 season included Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* with Opera San Jose, the title role in *Maria de Buenos Aires* with Nashville Opera, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the Rochester Philharmonic, Olga in *The Merry Widow* with the Metropolitan Opera, Rodrigo in *Pia de' Tolomei* with Spoleto USA, and Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Opera Santa Barbara, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Opera North. In the 2016-2017 season, she returned to the Metropolitan Opera to sing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Nymph in *Rusalka* and cover the Cretan Woman in *Idomeneo*, sang Tamiri in Vivaldi's *Farnace* with Spoleto USA, and the Zweite Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* with Cincinnati Opera. The 2015-2016 season brought Ms. Velasco's return to the Metropolitan Opera for productions of *Madama Butterfly* and *Simon Boccanegra* and her debut with Ash Lawn Opera as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*. Her engagements for 2014-2015 included Laura in Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* in her Metropolitan Opera debut, singing de Falla's *El Amor Brujo* in Poland, Vivaldi's *Salve Regina* in México, Philomène in Bohuslav Martinů's *Alexandre Bis* with Gotham Chamber Opera, and her debuts with San Diego Opera, Houston Grand Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago as Isabel/Dolores in *El Pasado Nunca Se Termina*, as well as Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* with the Princeton Festival. Additional highlights in the United States include Second Flower in Catan's *La Hija de Rappaccini* with Gotham Chamber Opera, Myrta in *Thaïs*, sharing the stage with Plácido Domingo, Mercedes in *Carmen* conducted by Plácido Domingo, 2nd Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, and the world premiere of *Jonah and the Whale*, all with Los Angeles Opera.

On the concert stage, Ms. Velasco has been a soloist with Los Angeles Opera Camera Orchestra, the Dream Orchestra, Charlemagne Orchestra in Belgium, Vivi Vivaldi Festival and the Aguascalientes Philharmonic in Mexico. Her performed concert repertoire includes Ravel's *Chansons Madecasses*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, Beethoven's *C Minor Mass*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Dvorak's *Requiem*, Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* and Beethoven's *9th Symphony*.

Ms. Velasco is the First Prize winner of several competitions in Mexico, among them the Carlo Morelli Competition (2011), where she also won the Audience Award, Maria Callas Award, Opera de Bellas Artes Award, and the Domingo-Embil Zarzuela Award. In 2012, she won First Prize in the National Competition of Young Voices in Bel Canto. Most recently, Ms. Velasco received the Encouragement Award at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (2013), an Encouragement Prize from the Loren Zachary Competition (2014), the Therese Anne McCarthy Memorial Prize at Opera San Miguel (2014), and she received a grant from Opera Buffs (2014).

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### ROLES

Nerone (cover)	Agrippina	Metropolitan Opera	2020
Suzuki	Madama Butterfly	Nashville Opera	2019
Isabel/ Dolores	El pasado nunca se termina	Fort Worth Opera	2019
Carmen	Carmen	Annapolis Opera	2019
Laura (cover)	Iolantha	Metropolitan Opera	2019
Alms Collector 2	Suor Angelica	Metropolitan Opera	2018
Rosina	Il barbiere di Siviglia	Opera North; Lyric Opera of Kansas City; Opera Santa Barbara	2018
Rodrigo	Pia de' Tolomei	Spoletto Festival USA	2018
Renata (cover)	Cruzar la cara de la luna	New York City Opera	2018
Olga	The Merry Widow	Metropolitan Opera	2017-18
Maria	Maria de Buenos Aires	Nashville Opera	2017
Dorabella	Così fan tutte	Opera San Jose	2017
Zweite Dame	Die Zauberflöte	Cincinnati Opera	2017
Tamiri	Farnace	Spoletto USA	2017
Cretan Woman (cover)	Idomeneo	Metropolitan Opera	2017
3rd Nymph	Rusalka	Metropolitan Opera	2017
Emilia	Otello	Orquesta Filarmónica de Jalisco	2017
Dorabella	Così fan tutte	Ash Lawn Opera	2016
Amelia's Maid (cover)	Simon Boccanegra	Metropolitan Opera	2016
Kate Pinkerton (cover)	Madama Butterfly	Metropolitan Opera	2016
Maddalena	Rigoletto	Orquesta Filarmónica de Jalisco	2016
Suzuki	Madama Butterfly	Orquesta Filarmónica de Jalisco	2016
Cherubino	Le nozze di Figaro	Princeton Festival; TVP INBA, Mexico	2015; '11
Isabel/Dolores	El Pasado nunca se termina	Lyric Opera of Chicago; San Diego; Houston Grand Opera	2015
Laura	Iolantha	Metropolitan Opera	2015
Myrtale	Thäis	Los Angeles Opera	2014
Philomène	Alexander Bis	Gotham Chamber Opera	2014
Margalit	Jonah and the Whale	Los Angeles Opera	2014
Lisinga	Le Cinesi	Orquesta de Cámara de Bellas Artes	2014
Mercedes	Carmen	Los Angeles Opera	2013
Zweite Dame	Die Zauberflöte	Los Angeles Opera	2013
Second Flower	La Hija de Rappaccini	Gotham Chamber Opera	2013
Isolier	Le comte Ory	ProOpera, Mexico	2012
Rosina	Il barbiere di Siviglia	Compañía Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico	2012
Angelina	La cenerentola	Compañía Nacional, Mexico	2012
Lola	Cavalleria Rusticana	Compañía Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico	2011
Lucilla	La scala di seta	ProOpera, Mexico	2011
Ernestina	L'occasione fa il ladro	ProOpera, Mexico	2011
Isabella	L'italiana in Algeri	Arpeggio Producciones, Mexico	2011
Carmela	La vie brève	CentrOpera	2009

### CONCERT WORK & RECITALS

Soloist	Beethoven <i>Ninth Symphony</i>	South Dakota Symphony; Rochester Phil	2020; '17
Soloist	Mozart <i>C minor mass</i>	Bard Festival Chorale at Carnegie Hall	2016
Soloist	<i>Chansons madécasses</i> (Ravel)	Los Angeles Opera Camera Orchestra	2014
Soloist	Young Artists in Recital	Los Angeles Opera	2014
Soloist	Mozart <i>Requiem</i>	Dream Orchestra, LA	2014
Soloist	Wagner's <i>Wesendonck Lieder</i>	Compañía Nacional de Bellas Artes	2013
Soloist	<i>Mass in C</i> (Beethoven)	Charlemagne Orchestra, Belgium	2012
Soloist	<i>Requiem</i> (Verdi)	Charlemagne Orchestra, Belgium	2011
Soloist	<i>Requiem</i> (Dvorak)	Solistas Ensemble Bellas Artes, Mexico	2011
Soloist	<i>Arianna a Naxos</i> (Haydn)	Vivi Vivaldi Festival, Mexico	2010
Soloist	<i>Stabat Mater</i> (Pergolesi)	Filarmónica de Aguascalientes, Mexico	2010
Soloist	<i>Ninth Symphony</i> (Beethoven)	Filarmónica de Aguascalientes; Jalisco; Acapulco	2008-12

# CASSANDRA ZOE VELASCO

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### CRITICAL ACCLAIM

#### **Carmen – Annapolis Opera**

"The titular character was performed by Cassandra Zoe Velasco, a vibrant and fierce mezzo-soprano. Her performance was beautifully compelling and her voice was radiant. Velasco connected with her scene partners and the audience well and played the role of catalyst well. She drove every action with grace and strength." -MD Theater Guide

#### **Rodrigo – Pia de' Tolomei – Spoleto Festival USA**

"Cassandra Zoe Velasco's hefty mezzo, which made Rodrigo a formidable, potent presence." -Opera News

"Cassandra Zoe Velasco, playing Pia's brother Rodrigo, was stunning. Her voice is not unlike the great Maria Callas, with the familiar timbre of a mezzo as well as amazing coloratura and dazzling high notes." -The Post and Courier

"She's well matched by Mexican mezzo Cassandra Zoe Velasco as her brother – a late example of the trouser role for Donizetti. Velasco's Rodrigo may appear more boy than man, but she has a powerful, compelling voice, firm and creamy, and evenly produced across a wide range. Her cabalettas, especially the final thrilling *L'astro che regge i miei destini*, show off an enviable coloratura" -Limelight Magazine

#### **Rosina – Il barbiere di Siviglia**

##### **Lyric Opera of Kansas City**

"mezzo-soprano Cassandra Zoe Velasco's brilliant portrayal of Rosina. Refreshingly, Velasco's Rosina is not the boring, innocent girl without desire, she is a bold character, playing on her sexuality and passion to get her way in the end."

- KC Metropolis

"Cassandra Zoé Velasco presented a Rosina who was both innocent and world-savvy. . . Cassandra sang her famous "Una voce poco fa" aria with grit and good humor: She has a deliciously dark-hued mezzo and a pleasant, full-bodied upper range as well."

- KC Independent

##### **Opera Santa Barbara**

"Cassandra Zoé Velasco was a charming Rosina whose singing was flexible. In "Una voce poco fa" . . . her tones soared up and plunged down her wide, beautifully colored vocal range. Writers often remark that Mexico sends us wonderful tenors and baritones but rarely women singers. Velasco is a lovely mezzo-soprano exception who sings and acts with assured grace and exquisite style. Her decorated lines showed her command of this role. She sang her difficult "Lesson Scene" as gracefully as though it was a simple folk song."

- Maria Nockin, Broadway World

#### **Maria de Buenos Aires – Nashville Opera**

"Channeling her experience at Teatro Colón in 2012 and employing her smoothest porteña accent, Velasco brought an entrancing, vulnerable Maria to the often hardened role. Through swift vocal transitions and visibly raw emotion, it was tempting to overlook the seductive tango performance and focus on Velasco as she dominated the stage."

-Caludia Willen, Vanderbilt Hustler

#### **Dorabella – Così fan tutte – Opera San Jose**

"Cassandra Zoé Velasco as Dorabella is both astute and suggestive, with a strong voice that is as striking as it is thoughtful—almost wise in its delivery."

-Tad Malone, MetroActive.com

#### **Cherubino – Le nozze di Figaro**

##### **Princeton Festival**

"Cassandra Zoé Velasco's Cherubino was a treat. She was utterly convincing as a teenaged boy, and she sang with a meltingly lovely mezzo."

-Joanne Sydney Lessner, Opera News

"Cassandra Zoe Velasco's concept of Cherubino – a "trouser role," with a woman playing a man (or in this case, a teenage boy) – is refreshing in its verisimilitude. Her portrayal is devoid of much of the mugging and cutesiness often associated with the character. Since he is already caught up in so many machinations and silly costume changes, further affectations are unnecessary. He comes across more than usual as a character of flesh and blood, even as the layers of ambiguity pile up (a female singer playing a male, who winds up disguised as a female)."

-Ross Amico, NJTimes.com

"A worthy audience favorite was 25-year old Mexican Cassandra Zoe Velasco, who already has a career well under way. She possesses a mezzo voice with real color and depth. She phrased with mature artistic sensibility while believably portraying Cherubino as an awkward adolescent. . . ."

-Andrew Moravcsik, Opera Today

"Ms. Velasco easily captured the adolescent yearning of the part, singing with quick and light coloratura, especially in the Act I aria "Non so più cosa son," accompanied by light winds."

-Nancy Plum, TownTopics.com

### **Centro Nacional de las Artes**

"Stresses the creation of her character Cassandra Zoe Velasco, who is an unparalleled Cherubino, feverish and Adonis loving teen that wants at all and gets all"

- Manuel Yrizar

### **Philomène – Martinů's *Alexandre Bis* – Gotham Chamber Opera**

"Mezzo Cassandra Zoé Velasco, fluid of voice and saucy in manner, was the maid Philomène in *Alexandre Bis*."

-Fred Cohn, Opera News

"Cassandra Zoé Velasco as the maid and Jason Slayden as the randy Oscar are also charming." -New York Times

"Cassandra Zoé Velasco as the disapproving maid Philomène, who brought some coloratura flourish to the vocal music in her "dream" incarnation as the Goddess of Marriage."

- Heidi Waleson, Wall Street Journal

"Velasco was charming as the maid, and impressed with her warm yet agile mezzo-soprano, particularly when she appears as the goddess of marriage in the guilt-ridden Armande's dream sequence."

- Richard Peters, Bachtrack.com

### **Margalit – *Jonah and the Whale* – Los Angeles Opera**

"Cassandra Velasco has an opulent mezzo-soprano voice and sang the Margalit role with wonderful creamy chocolate tones"

- Maria Nockin, ProOpera Magazine

### **Mercedes – *Carmen* – Los Angeles Opera**

The word, "warm" also describes the quality of Cassandra Zoé Velasco's mezzo as Mercédès. She too is a member of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program. As I watched her sitting next to Hae Ji Chang, who played Frasquita, I kept thinking, "Now there is a Carmen in the making." Both her voice and face forced my eyes in her direction..."

- Carol Jean Delmar, Opera Theater Ink

### **Rosina – *Il barbiere di Siviglia* –Palacio de Bellas Artes**

"... at her young age, she gave us not only a great Rosina... showed that she is a real promise of another star in operatic firmament of the world. She didn't lose the opportunity to shine at "una voce poco fa" making us understand with music and acting every detail of the personality of the heroine of the story. Also she let us see her coquetry and comedic acting during the lesson. It is my firm belief that this girl will shine sooner than before, because she has the instrument, the musicality, presence and acting... raw materials that she must continue to work to make her potential in a reality. "

- Luis Gutierrez, ProOpera Magazine

"Mezzosoprano Cassandra Zoe Velasco shows a brilliant coloratura, flawless intonation, soft and warm registration in her interpretation of "Una Voce poco fa". Her singing is top notch and her performance has charm and humor, she sang with exceptional pitch control and lustrous tone, It's a very talented artist, and is clearly intended for great things"

- John Bills, Opera de San Miguel

### **Isolier – *Le comte Ory* – Centro Nacional de las Artes**

"...I fell in love with Isolier since she appeared on the scene. What a coloratura as well resolved! And how convincing was her performance! Gentlemen!... something tells me that finally we have a worthy successor to our mythical Oralia Dominguez"

- Lazaro Azar, Reforma Newspaper

"Cassandra Zoe Velasco as Isolier won the show! She's tiny but shows a big and dark voice! Sometimes this character is lost in many productions as second character but Cassandra kept always present as a noble servant, cunning and better lover. Her voice captivated because besides beautiful and solvent, she had the extraordinary ability to express a convincing reading of male psychology"

- Hugo Roca Joglar, ProOpera Magazine

### **Angelina – *La Cenerentola* – Palacio de Bellas Artes**

"... also with a voice that ran fine, it was a delight to listen Cassandra Zoe as Cenerentola. What a beautiful color! and how swiftly she dominated the final rondo "Non più mesta"."

- Lazaro Azar, Reforma newspaper

### **Second Lady – *Die Zauberflöte* – Los Angeles Opera**

"The Three Ladies who really did slay the monster were... Velasco was particularly well focused and provided sumptuous harmony..."

- Maria Nockin, Opera Today