



## "The Opera Locos": Opera maniacs!

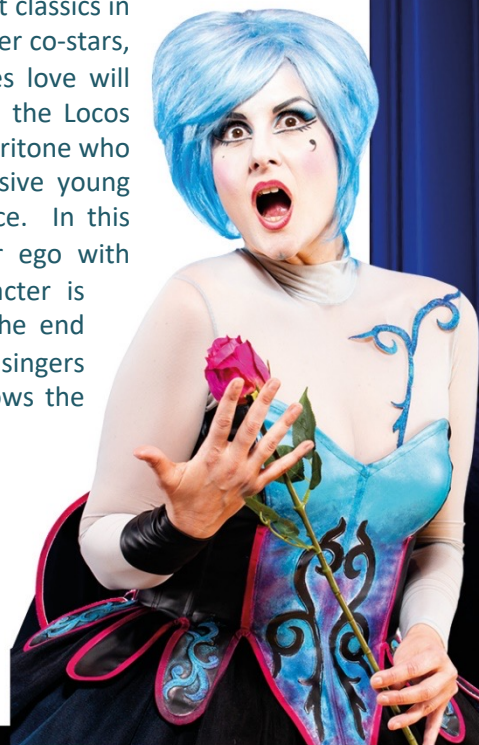
Paloma Clément Picos. 18 December 2018

Spain is truly on a roll. After putting its series "Casa de Papel" on TV schedules all over, the country is now taking over in opera as its wackiest troupe lands in Paris. More than an interpretation of just any three-hour classic, this "comic opera show" is the best of cleverly crafted lyrical art. All in less than an hour and a half. Forget the title. Opera is just an excuse here. This story is not about "Tosca", "Carmen" or "The Magic Flute", but rather about five eccentric characters who communicate exclusively opera-style. No matter which masterpiece is taken on, each singer steals the show from the composers by imposing their own personality on the scores yet without taking anything away from the magic of the original work. Verdi answers back to Mozart, then Offenbach passes the microphone to Puccini and all of a sudden one of the singers goes off the rails and starts singing Celine Dion. Far from an exception, other pop hits have also crept into this playlist - even a Rossini-Mika mashup. It's quite the anachronism.

### Wacky visual theatre

Although the tone is hardly serious, the acting is impeccable. "This show is a dream for all of us," says soprano Maria Rey-Joly. Being able to sing the greatest classics in our repertoire in a crazy, funny way is unique in this field." Just like her co-stars, the singer has a specific role: "My character is naive; she believes love will always win out." And that is her quest throughout the evening. In the Locos family, there's also a fallen tenor who drowns himself in alcohol, a baritone who refuses to diverge from the original work, a rebellious and impulsive young countertenor and a mezzo-soprano ready to do anything to seduce. In this beautiful world united by opera, everyone tries to impose their ego with ~~triviality~~ and the beginning of the show suggests that each character is anchored in their own role to the point of falling into a cliché, the end completely shatters that idea. The other surprise comes when the singers get the audience involved to prove that, in the end, everyone knows the ~~classics~~

The show is by Yllana, a Spanish company that specializes in comedy theatre. These comic show professionals refuse to put any form of dialogue in their works, giving way to visual theatre and physical performances. Locos does this brilliantly. Following a timid start, the show has finally conquered Madrid. Tackling the French capital will surely be even more difficult. Fortunately, Spanish-language audience grabbers are popular right now!





**Le Parisien**

## Show in Paris: revisit the opera, from Bizet to... Mika

The Opera Locos show revisits the classics by the great composers with an offbeat, modern adaptation at the Libre theatre until 2nd February. Deliciously burlesque.

Marie Briand-Locu. 10/12/2019

Naked in the shower and partially hidden by a curtain, a guy begins singing something by the composer Handel all while sudsing up. **The youngest laugh; the others revel in the vocal performance.** The show **Opéra Locos** gives opera a major facelift with staging as captivating as it is stunning at the Libre theatre until 2nd February 2020. Eccentric costumes reminiscent of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, outrageous makeup and exaggerated mimicry embellish a burlesque scenario. Even that much that one finds themselves wriggling to the sound of La Traviata. And that's when The Magic Flute isn't coming out of their mouths.

The five blue-haired, pale-skinned singers **hum the greats as well as pop hits. From Bizet to Mika.** The classics revisited, **without blushing.** **Their powerful voices are amazing.** High, low, mixed... **Tones of all colours, one after another, absolutely delight our ears. And our eyes are all but left out:** the glittery jewellery shines under the purple, pink and blue reflections from the lights much like fascinating paintings.

With no dialogue and filled with onomatopoeia, the play **takes you through a long list of crazy situations.** There's a somewhat tubby character who tries to commit suicide with a can of petrol, stunned that a rope is thrown at him. And a bashful lover who screams out the Queen of the Night while punctuating her notes with a lighter. The poor thing: she has just found some panties in her loved one's wardrobe.

Another woman, with a look of shooting pain, whispers "Love is a Rebellious Bird" in a red circle while roaring like a tiger. It's an intoxicating moment, much like a cabaret.

Her companion does a bit of a moonwalk. A tenor gives you the shivers as he belts out his version of Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You". The audience gets **an awesome "opera master class"** as one of the actors shares his microphone with them. One spectator tries to imitate him. It's really quite funny. **A resolutely modern and scrumptious opera.**



**RAMI ELGAR**

**YLLANA**

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# ABC

## The Opera Locos: Yllana Connects with the Public

Antonio Illán Illán. 18/05/2019

Yllana is a factory of imagination, a philosophy, a style and a sense of empathy. **Yllana connects with audiences looking for a good time by serving up an aesthetic, modern tasting menu in bite-sized doses. The Opera Locos is a clear example of the company's aesthetics and production style. The formula works.** They keep revamping themselves, yet they made a place for themselves in the collective consciousness. People know what they do and can't wait to go to see them. **Their success is underpinned by solid foundations.**

The Opera Locos packed the Teatro de Rojas. **Impossible to buy a last-minute ticket. People paid with pleasure. And it's fun, but not that superficial industry of empty amusement: there is also musical sensibility here.**

In this production, five opera singers star in a story of simple relationships that serves as a pretext for a comic opera show that combines opera's greatest hits with other musical styles. **Opera for all audiences, which the public embraces because they can connect with it in such a natural, fresh, unusual and amusing way.**

The **spectacular** nature of the show in no way overshadows the narrative, which reveals the battle of egos waged by the unusual troupe of five eccentric opera singers who serve up a concert featuring a repertoire of the genre's greatest composers. The hidden passions and desires of each will be revealed as the comedy unfolds. And Yllana, up on the latest and well familiar with the world we live in, leaves evidence of that world, like the well-known gay couple.

The **sketches hilariously** play out against the backdrop of this simple conceptual plot, featuring excerpts from some of **the most popular operas that even people who may not be opera-lovers will recognise.** The surprising thing is that these beautiful arias from opera masterpieces often **segue into jazz or American musical comedy**, even into anthological and universally popular melodies such as the theme song from the film Titanic.

The **show brims with comedy and creativity.** The voices, slightly amplified, are heard live over pre-recorded music. **It is packed with rhythm and a power to connect with the audience, which is actively engaged** and whose general collaboration is requested at different



# the OPERA LOCOS

## ABC

points, including the active participation of some audience members on stage.

**The outstanding voices and performances and the non-stop comedy were an open invitation to merriment, and the audience showed it with applause and laughter after each number, the strongest applause going for the most outrageous, wildest character.**

A simple **set design**, representing a ballroom or a cabaret and a minimalist dressing room that perfectly contextualised these madmen of the opera, was the backdrop for the musical numbers flawlessly crafted by Yllana and Eldar. The excellent, effective lighting design is also worth a mention.

**The singing, with impeccable drama**, much enhanced by the eccentric costumes and portrayal of the characters, was **brilliant**. The **harmonious and delightful voices**, with the exhibitions of range typical of professionals of the genre, **were on a par with the imaginative scope of the show**. **Special mention goes to mezzo-soprano Mayca Teba, capable of slicing the air on the high notes and caressing you on others, and the versatile soprano and master of a wide range of registers, María Rey Joly, full of nuances and the most powerful voice in the group. Tenor Toni Comas with his warmth, baritone Enrique Sánchez Ramos with his clear timbre, and countertenor Jesús García Gallera also proved their musical chops and acting prowess.**

All the elements that shape The Opera Locos, together with its punk vibe (think Tim Burton's "Scissorhands" or "Corpse Bride" and other characters from his films), come together to **create the perfect show, not just for Yllana's fans, but also as a way of introducing younger audiences and the uninitiated to the by-no-means elite world of opera.**

**This dynamic, delightful performance by Yllana is an all-round good time, a chance to enjoy a collection of opera and other musical classics.** It was certainly well-received by the audience at the Rojas Theatre, ending to much applause and a standing ovation.





**LA VANGUARDIA**

## Yllana presents 'The Opera Locos' in Madrid to “Bring Opera to a New Audience”

Article for Europa Press. 12/09/2018

Yllana presents the premiere of 'The Opera Locos' at the Teatros del Canal de la Comunidad de Madrid to “bring opera to a new audience”, according to its artistic director David Ottone. The show is an original idea by Yllana and Rami Eldar and is part of Escenario Clece for Teatros del Canal, with performances in the theatre's Sala Roja running from 12 September to 7 October.

Ottone said he was “delighted” with this show, which he says walks the line “between comedy and music”. “I think that the idea is to introduce opera to an audience that normally doesn’t go to the opera because it seems too elitist or because of the cost. Those who understand the world of opera are fascinated by it, and it’s a very good way of introducing people not so familiar with opera to the genre”, he adds.

The production, put together with Klemark and Rami Eldar, features five lyrical singers who come together to give a performance, but soon bring out “hidden feelings and passions” that turn the stage into a “battlefield”, with “crazy, unpredictable” consequences, according to the company.

The show features the voices of soloists María Rey Joly, Mayca Teba, Toni Comas, Enrique Sánchez Ramos and Jesús García Gallera, with artistic direction by David Ottone and Joe O'Courneen and musical direction by Marc Álvarez and Manuel Coves.

“Starting with the lyrical, which is fundamental, a character, a comedy and a clown are added to the mix. It's been something new for us, quite different and wonderful”, says actress María Rey Joly.

Likewise, Ottone has created his “own opera” from “very well-known” pieces from the opera world and others “not so well known”. “They’re love stories that, through five marvellous characters, express a host of emotions. The trickiest thing has been to find five artists with amazing voices and who also have the talent to do comedy”, he says.

The repertoire includes pieces ranging from ‘Habanera’, by Carmen G. Bizet and ‘Va pensiero’ by Nabucco G. Verdi to ‘Nessun dorma’ by Turandot G. Puccini, among others, as well as pieces from popular music. The show also has an “international appeal” since, according to Ottone, it will be performed in Paris, Korea and Japan.

Yllana was founded in 1991 as a physical comedy theatre company. Today it focuses on the creation, production and distribution of shows, events and audiovisual presentations, as well as the management of theatre venues and the development of a variety of cultural projects. The members of Yllana are Juan Francisco Ramos, Marcos Ottone, David Ottone, Joseph O'Courneen and Fidel Fernández.



**RAMI ELGAR**

**YLLANA**

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# the OPERA LOCOS

TimeOut MADRID

## The Opera Locos

Pilar G. Almansa. 18 September 2018

Do you know that feeling of leaving the theatre with a new zest for life? Well, that's precisely what 'The Opera Locos' does. This is another success by Yllana, a family show, for children, for adults, for people of all ages and all walks of life, a brilliant way to entertain, a kind of hook to get people passionate about bel canto. A show which, with no more visual extravagance than a stupendous set design and stunning lighting, is also a delight for the eyes.

But the real stars of 'The Opera Locos' are its performers: **María Rey-Joly makes an impact in a very delicate role; Toni Comas nobly defends his motley; Enrique Sánchez Ramos delivers an implausible twist with his singing and acting; Jesús Gallera is an all-round performer, with amazing physical training, and already a veteran of musical comedies such as 'Spamalot'. Mayka Teba gets to play the most thankless role, the one that requires the most from the performer: the one that directly involves the audience. She dazzles.**

And the five fill the Canal's Sala Roja with their voices, enhanced by the incredible musical direction of Marc Álvarez and Manuel Coves. There are parts that are **physically overwhelming**, because of the **thrilling emotion** conveyed by the ensemble. Only the die-hards will miss a live orchestra, because if the goal was to surround the audience with music, they certainly succeeded in doing so.

'The Opera Locos' is a show that makes people happy. Is there anything better?



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# IDEAL

## A Mad Night at the Opera

Alberto Román. 21 May 2018

The 30<sup>th</sup> Festival Internacional de Música y Danza 'Ciudad de Úbeda' reserved a space for comedy during its first weekend, but without overstepping the limits of its eminently musical programme: **the laughter, in this case, goes hand in hand with a 'bel canto' performance.** This winning combination was delivered by 'The Opera Locos', with the unmistakable trademark of physical comedy company Yllana, performing at the festival mere days after it opened.

**It is difficult to discern whether this is an opera concert that manages to make you laugh thanks to its large doses of humour, or a comedy performance that manages to move you with its powerful moments of opera. But the fact remains that both those who come looking for the former and those who come for the latter walk away fully satisfied.**

This was the case on Sunday night at the Teatro Ideal Cinema, where several hundred people spent a **mad night at the opera.** The love affair between Yllana and Úbeda, long-standing and far from fading (rather, it's intensifying with new fans of the company's work), was once again made clear. It shouldn't come as a surprise that almost all the company's shows have been performed at the Ideal Cinema since the mythical 'Glub, glub' almost two decades ago.

In 'The Opera Locos', an unusual troupe of five eccentric opera singers prepares to perform a concert featuring a repertoire of the genre's greatest composers. The hidden passions and desires of each singer will be revealed as the show unfolds with wild, unpredictable consequences.

María Rey-Joly (soprano), Mayca Teba (mezzo-soprano), Toni Comas (tenor), Enrique Sánchez Ramos (baritone) and Jesús García Gallera (countertenor) are the five lyrical singers featured in this comic opera show based on the genre's greatest hits combined with other musical styles in an original way. The result is a new and different experience when it comes to opera, one that introduces it to all audiences in a fresh, original and entertaining way.

The show is also wrapped up in a **unique set and aesthetics, and a good part of it is spiced up with audience participation, something that Yllana knows how to take advantage of very well.**





## INFORMACIÓN

### The Opera Locos: Masterful and Moving

Marc Llorente. 18 December 2018

This is quite the pre-Christmas celebration with a **masterful and moving show from the Yllana** theatre company. The Principal opens its doors to a slightly gothic set and five unusual lyrical singers who **do more than just sing a superb repertoire of opera and other popular pieces**: they manage to do it in an extraordinary way, offer up an evening bursting with opera and comedy. **Those fortunate enough to be in the audience got to savour the sweetness of a gem of a production**, created and directed by Yllana and based on the original idea of David Ottone, one of the members of this company, and Rami Eldar. While it could have easily been naïve or clumsy, it was far from it. The cast wears heavy make-up and outlandish costumes that go down easy. They set the performance in motion with their distortions and variations.

Striving to strike a **comic chord** and showing **great mastery in the performance of the opera pieces**, which are cleverly combined with other musical styles throughout the show, **the voices hit all registers in this outpouring of art, and the expressive performers act like experienced actors**. María Rey, Mayca Teba, Toni Comas, Enrique Sánchez and Jesús García exhibit their versatility, contrast and just the right nuances. More than laughing out loud, **you smile and are moved by a job well done paired with beautiful music**.

**A participative singing class in the style of a playful cabaret.** And the stars adapt perfectly to Yllana's visual themes. Singing in the shower, a suicidal man singing A mi manera (My Way). **The brilliant recording of the Orquesta Sinfonica Verum makes your hair stand on end.**

**The finales are tremendous.** A slew of songs includes Habanera, Vesti la glubba, Granada, Sous le dôme épais and Nessun dorma by Bizet, Leoncavallo, Agustin Lara, Delibes and Puccini, respectively. Hidden passions are uncovered through three couples. Two men, a man and a woman and one with a spectator.

Carlos Chamorro's choreography, the lights and the set design do their part to ensure that the aesthetics and content of The Opera Locos get the warmed-up audience up and out of their seats.







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## The Award-Winning 'The Opera Locos' Takes the Stage at the Circo de Marte

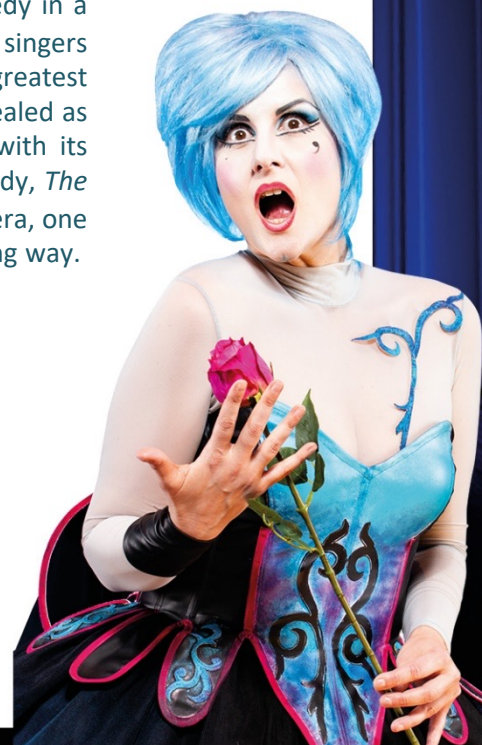
The show, put on by the Yllana theatre company and winner of the 2019 Max Award for Best Musical Show, will be performed on 3 November at this cultural space in Santa Cruz de la Palma.

elDiario.es 30 October 2019

The 2019 Canary Islands Performing Arts Festival, organized by the CajaCanarias Foundation and La Caixa, continues its calendar of performances this Thursday, 31 October, with the kick-off of the tour of the Yllana theatre company and its award-winning show *The Opera Locos*, which will visit several theatres in the archipelago. The show, which won the 2019 Max Award for Best Musical Show, can be seen this Thursday at the Teatro El Salinero (Lanzarote), as well as on 1, 2 and 3 November at the Palacio de Formación y Congresos (Fuerteventura), Teatro Leal (Tenerife) and Teatro Circo de Marte (La Palma), respectively. All four performances will start at 8:30 p.m. and the last remaining tickets can be purchased at [www.festivalcae.com](http://www.festivalcae.com), as well as at the theatres' box offices.

*The Opera Locos*, starring soloists María Rey Joly, Mayca Teba, Toni Comas, Enrique Sánchez Ramos and Jesús Gallera, blends music and comedy in a show for all audiences. This unusual troupe of five eccentric opera singers serves up a concert featuring a repertoire of the genre's greatest composers. The hidden passions and desires of each singer are revealed as the show unfolds with wild, unpredictable consequences. Thus, with its singular set, a carefully crafted aesthetic and a keen sense of comedy, *The Opera Locos* is a new and different experience when it comes to opera, one that introduces it to all audiences in a fresh, original and entertaining way.

The obvious vocal quality of its members, as well as their self-confidence, naturalness and mischievousness on stage, all help to create a comic opera show in which the audience can enjoy some of opera's greatest hits, seamlessly combined with a range of musical styles like rock with an astonishing ease. Although their miming and gestures may make it seem otherwise, all songs are strictly performed live.



**RAMI ELGAR**

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# the OPERA LOCOS

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As a lead-up to Yllana's four theatrical performances for the CAE 2019 Festival, more than 700 schoolchildren from the province of Santa Cruz de Tenerife were able to enjoy a special adapted version of *The Opera Locos* yesterday and today at the Espacio Cultural CajaCanarias in Santa Cruz de Tenerife



**RAMI ELGAR**

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## LA RAZÓN

### The Opera Locos: Un juguete bien afinado

R. Losáñez. 14 September 2018

Arias from "Nabucco", "Carmen", "Turandot", "La bohème" and "Samson and Delilah", among other popular operas, shape the repertoire of this show with which popular theatre company Yllana proves that it doesn't shy away from any type of theatrical production and knows just how to add its signature style to each and every one. Obviously, The Opera Locos isn't trying to sell itself as a memorable show for opera aficionados and purists; the result of such an attempt would have been a futile folly. Indeed, the **main achievement** of artistic directors David Ottone and Joe O'Courneen lies in the apparent modesty of their intent: to simply design **the best format to make a casual, entertaining connection between the audience and a group of composers possible, without sacrificing quality in the least. An intention to provide an opportunity to connect with a genre which, due to the lack of training that has traditionally existed in this field, many would never have dared to tackle before, believing the songs to be elitist, boring or undecipherable.** Certainly, pulling off this connection required having **musical directors of the calibre of Manuel Coves and Marc Álvarez and hosts as talented, insightful and generous as the five performers in the cast. Few are better suited to this production than soprano María Rey Joly, mezzo-soprano Mayca Teba, baritone Enrique Sánchez Ramos, tenor Antoni Comas and countertenor Jesús García Gallera; not only for their sheer musical range, but also for their ability to venture with elegance and admirable ease down the paths of theatrical comedy that the simplified but effective playwriting demands.** Expressed on stage through a sort of pantomime with a cinematic and Chaplinesque air, a language that Yllana has mastered like no one else, it is this **purely comedic plot line** that makes it possible to weave together the different operas, successively delivering them to the audience at the most effective moment: right when a smile has started to form. **There are some truly ingenious situations, such as the fusion of classical pieces and pop songs in the same chords, and others more vibrant and even virtuosic, such as the finale featuring a performance of Nessum dorma.**

