



Oh opera!

The Colorado opera scene is chalk-full of skilled singers, elaborate costumes and historic venues reminiscent of old-world entertainment.

During the mining boom, opera houses became status symbols to show that a town actually had “arts and culture”—despite the rowdy saloons and Wild West lawlessness of the day. Now, while some are more modern than others, each opera house has its own unique architecture and atmosphere that sets the stage for any high-brow event. For instance, the Ellie Caulkins Opera House in downtown Denver is a part of the renowned Denver Performing Arts Complex. Built in 1908, “The Ellie” houses a 2,225-seat hall, acoustical excellence and state-of-the-art technology. People come from all around the world to experience The Ellie’s wow factor.

However, the popularity of opera is also a result of the incredible talent pool in our state. Local singer, actor and teacher Jennifer DeDominici is one of Colorado’s brightest stars. She recalls the moment she fell in love with being on stage: “My first favorite memory on stage was in the student matinee production of *Hänsel und Gretel* with Opera Colorado. I was playing the role of Hänsel, the brother. At one point in the opera, Gretel and I ‘fell asleep’ center stage, surrounded by a children’s chorus of angels while

the orchestra played a most beautiful instrumental dream sequence. I remember lying there feeling the vibrations of the orchestra underneath me and thinking, “There is nowhere I would rather be.”

DeDominici just finished performing in *The Light in the Piazza* at Central City Opera; and she will be performing *Camille Claudel: Into the Fire*, a piece for mezzo soprano and string quartet, at the Plein Air Festival in Central City in September. In December, DeDominici will be playing the Mother in the opera *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in Boulder and Colorado Springs. And, did we mention she also teaches at CU Boulder and Colorado College? Her advice for anyone pursuing a career in the performing arts is “stay flexible and keep finding the joy in the art.”

Mountain town opera houses

Central City Opera

Built in 1878 by Welsh and Cornish miners, this National Historic Landmark is the centerpiece of the historic gold mining town of Central City.

Sheridan Opera House

Built in 1913, the Sheridan Opera House is an intimate 238-seat theater and is known as “The Crown Jewel of Telluride.”

Tabor Opera House

The Tabor Opera House was built in 100 days in 1879 by mining magnate Horace (H.A.W.) Tabor, prior to the arrival of the railroad in Leadville.

Wheeler Opera House

Built in 1889, the Wheeler was renovated and reopened in 1984. Very quickly, it once again became Aspen’s most beloved building, in use almost every day of the year.

Wright Opera House

Built in 1888, the Wright Opera House was considered Ouray County’s center of arts and culture. Visit coloradooperahouses.com/calendar for all opera house schedules.

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