



**David Lomeli**, who makes his Houston Grand Opera debut this month as Alfredo in *La Traviata*, once auditioned for the company's young-artist program — and didn't get in. "They were very nice, very encouraging, but the people in Houston said that I was good, but not *that* good. And they were correct. I was just out of university, and at that time I was flying with a lot of intuition and raw talent. I needed more serious study." Lomeli, who took voice lessons and performed some opera while completing his computer-science engineering degree at Mexico's University of Monterrey, began the serious study he needed at the Sociedad Internacional de Valores de Arte Mexicano (SIVAM), Mexico's most prestigious young-artist program. Lomeli received an enormous career boost in 2006, when Plácido Domingo offered the twenty-four-year-old tenor a berth in the young-artist program at Los Angeles Opera, plus a chance to compete in the upcoming Operalia. Lomeli won first place in the general competition, as well as the zarzuela prize. "That Operalia was my first competition, and my winning [it] kind of validated my move across the river, if you know what I mean. I knew then that I could do this, but I also knew that I was not done with my work. It seems now as if what followed was always supposed to happen, but as Steve Jobs said, 'You can only connect the dots backwards.'"

During his two seasons in the Los Angeles program, Lomeli sang relatively few performances — a situation that changed when he moved on to the Merola Program and an Adler Fellowship at San Francisco Opera. There, his assignments included Rinuccio in SFO's 2009 *Gianni Schicchi*, an ideal role for his honeyed tenor and beguilingly ardent phrasing. Lomeli made another big hit the following season, in New York City Opera's revival of *L'Elisir d'Amore*; his Nemorino — endearingly shy but capable of beautifully poised high notes — stole the notices and grabbed the attention of opera fans. Since then, Lomeli has arrived at Santa Fe Opera, Canadian Opera Company and Opéra de Lille. He has upcoming debuts set for Glyndebourne and the Hollywood Bowl.

Lomeli feels that the lyric-tenor repertory — especially the operas of Donizetti — is where his voice belongs, and he looks forward to singing Percy in *Anna Bolena* and Leicester in *Maria Stuarda*. "My dream roles now are Benvenuto Cellini and [Arnold in] *Guillaume Tell*. I hope I can be there in the next five, ten years. I can sing a full *Rigoletto* now — with no cuts, taking all the optional high notes — and I'm fresh to sing the next day and still have stamina and energy after it. But when I sing toward the heavier part of my repertoire, it takes a toll on my body — it tells me to be careful. I need to save these big things like *Werther* for later. For the next couple, five, ten years, I want to keep it healthy and high."

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