

## 'Il Trovatore' lights up opera in the Heights March 15-25

Written by Forward Times Staff  
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### Hot-blooded opera full of crowd pleasing hits

Opera in the Heights (*Oh!*) will open its last production of the season, Giuseppe Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, on March 15. A beloved favorite, this opera has a surprising plot featuring gypsy camps, the burning of heretics, and family secrets, all brought to life by incomparable music.

A love triangle: Count di Luna and Manrico both love the beautiful Leonora. She favors Manrico with his midnight serenades. The gypsy Azucena and the di Luna family seek revenge on one another over an incident in the past, centering on a lost baby brother of the Count. Each of these elements affects the others as the past haunts the present.

Michelle Johnson and Lara Tillotson will portray Leonora. Last March Michelle was a winner in the Metropolitan Opera's National Council Auditions. Anthony Tommasini of The New York Times said, "A clear audience favorite, Michelle Johnson seems to have the vocal goods as well as star power." Michelle is from Pearland, so she's another hometown success!

Dallas-area native Lara Tillotson returns to *Oh!* after having sung the title role in *Tosca* here in 2008 and *Amelia* in

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*Un ballo in maschera*  
in 2010.

Artistic Director Enrique Carreón-Robledo prepares the singers and conducts the orchestra, and Brian Byrnes directs the action onstage. C. Vincent Fuller prepares the chorus, Rachel Smith and Erin Pruetz are the set designers, Dena Scheh designs the costumes, and the stage lighting is done by Kevin Taylor.

Performance dates are March 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, and 25 (matinee). Single ticket prices are \$20-\$55, senior tickets are \$15-\$41, and student tickets are \$10 anytime in designated areas.

Opera in the Heights, a professional regional company, exists to provide a stage for emerging performers and bring affordable opera to the Greater Houston Area. All operas are fully staged with orchestra and presented in the original language with English surtitles projected above the stage.

Evening performances begin at 7:30 pm and the matinee at 2:00 pm at Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. in the Houston Heights. For tickets, please visit [www.operaintheheights.org](http://www.operaintheheights.org) or call 713-861-5303.