



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## 2016 SEASON IN REVIEW

SANTA FE OPERA REPORTS STRONG TICKET SALES AND FUNDRAISING FOR ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON, THE LAUNCH OF A NEW WEBSITE, AND AN EXTENSION TO ITS CHIEF CONDUCTOR'S CONTRACT UNTIL 2020

### CHIEF CONDUCTOR HARRY BICKET

Harry Bicket, whose tenure as Chief Conductor was announced in 2013, has renewed his relationship with the Opera, extending his contract until September 30, 2020. Internationally-renowned as both opera and concert conductor, Maestro Bicket led a critically-acclaimed production of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* in the 2016 season and returns in 2017 to repertory for which his interpretation is most noted with Handel's *Alcina*. "We are so fortunate to have the brilliance of Harry Bicket leading our outstanding Orchestra," said General Director Charles MacKay. "Audience members and critics alike have noted the enhanced ensemble of our orchestra throughout his tenure. Santa Fe Opera appreciates Maestro Bicket's contribution to our artistic achievements, and we look forward to our continued relationship."

"I am thrilled to be able to continue my relationship with the orchestra and artistic management of Santa Fe Opera," said Maestro Harry Bicket. "It has been, and continues to be, one of the most stimulating and exciting experiences of my career and I look forward to building further on the achievements of the past three years."

### ARTISTIC SUCCESS

Santa Fe Opera's 60th anniversary season offered 37 performances of five operas, including two company premieres and all new productions. The season opened with *La Fanciulla del West*, Puccini's fitting romantic portrait of the "Golden West." Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Samuel Barber's twentieth-century masterpiece *Vanessa* both received exceptional critical and audience response. Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* entered Santa Fe Opera's canon of French masterpieces while Strauss' *Capriccio* continued the company's commitment to performing the works of Richard Strauss since its founding by John O. Crosby.

### TICKET SALES

Santa Fe Opera reported \$8.5 million (unaudited figure) in ticket sales and attendance of more than 75,000 during the 2016 season. Throughout the summer, 91% of the Crosby Theatre was filled. 50% of attendees were from New Mexico, 48% from the other 49 states and the District of Columbia, and 2% from 30 foreign countries.

### NEW WEBSITE

The Opera's renovations have now reached beyond enhancements to its physical structure: a new website fit to illustrate the company's picture-worthy setting and productions has been launched. Media-rich with greater ease of navigation, the website now shares the Santa Fe Opera story in a more intuitive and user-friendly way. With significant sales being made through the website (\$3.4 million 2016), the Opera is certain the redesign will prove a capital improvement worthy of its investment.

### CONTRIBUTIONS

The company reported \$8.3 million (unaudited figure) in annual operating support for the 2016 fiscal year which ended on September 30. This figure marks the second highest amount of annual contributions in the company's history.

## “SETTING THE STAGE” CAMPAIGN

The generosity of Santa Fe Opera’s Board of Directors and hundreds of individual donors has resulted in \$41.9 of \$45 million raised for the “Setting the Stage” campaign. Behind the scenes, our production staff returned in 2016 to new and expansive paint, props, and scene shops while audience members enjoyed extended terraces on the north side of the Crosby Theatre and a new Opera Club. The Opera’s renovation continues in the spring of 2017 with construction of an on-site props storage building and the repaving and landscaping of the main patron parking lot.

## COME HOME AND #SFO60

The Opera welcomed alumni from all over the country to reconnect with the company and former colleagues in celebration of the 60th anniversary season. The weekend-long celebration brought together artists, technicians, and administrators from across all six decades, including many who helped build the company from its first year.

In further celebration of the 60th anniversary season and with a nod to future audiences, the Opera organized a photography exhibit, #sfo60. The show featured images from the Opera’s highly successful Instameets, events that brought together Instagram users from all corners of the community to experience a night at the Opera, in collaboration with local business Simply Social Media. The photographs told the story of the Opera experience in ways never shown before - collectively, through the fresh eyes of the visitor, many of whom hadn’t previously attended. Out of more than 1,000 submissions, 60 photographs were chosen for the exhibit, decided by a panel from the local arts community. The images were then shown at Iconik Coffee Roasters in the up-and-coming Second Street neighborhood of Santa Fe. Although the show is over, the entirety of the submissions can be seen on Instagram by searching the hashtags #sfoInstameet and #sfo60.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In April Santa Fe Opera presented the world premiere of *UnShakeable*, an opera commissioned for the Shakespeare 400 and composed by Joseph Illick with a libretto by Andrea Fellows Walters, the Opera’s Director of Education and Community Programs. Drawing from the plays of William Shakespeare and set 25 years in the future, *UnShakeable* is a love story of Meridian and Wyatt, Shakespearean actors who have been separated by a viral pandemic that affects memory. The premiere performances were well-received with houses sold to capacity and an encore run took that place in the fall. This opera joins the canon of works being developed in the Opera for All Ages initiative.

## CO-PRODUCTIONS AND RENTALS

In February Opera Philadelphia presented the East Coast premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s *Cold Mountain*, a co-commission and co-production by Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia, and Minnesota Opera in collaboration with North Carolina Opera. In October San Francisco Opera presented Laurent Pelly’s production of *Don Pasquale*, seen last in Santa Fe Opera’s 2014 season, which was a co-production with the two companies and Gran Teatre del Liceu. Other productions originating at Santa Fe Opera have been seen throughout the United States in the 2015-2016 season: *Madame Butterfly* (2010) at LA Opera, *The Elixir of Love* (2009) at Opera Philadelphia, and *The Daughter of the Regiment* (2015) at Indiana University’s Jacobs School of Music.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the Board of Directors meeting on November 11, 2016, Santa Fe Opera welcomed Santa Fe-based **ERIN BUNKLEY** as a new Director. Mrs. Bunkley leads the global brand strategy and planning efforts for vitamins, including mergers and acquisitions, at Otsuka Holdings, a \$13B Japan-based pharmaceutical and nutraceutical company. The Board also appointed two Ex-Officio Directors: **EDWARD B. HYMSON**, President of the Santa Fe Opera Club, and **DR. NORMAN DOGGETT**, President of The Guilds of The Santa Fe Opera, Inc.

Previously elected to the Board of Directors in fiscal year 2016:

**DR. JENNE K. BRITELL** (Chairman of the Board, United Rentals Inc.; Director, Crown Holdings, Inc.; Director, Quest Diagnostics, Inc.; Director, U.S. Russia Foundation for Entrepreneurship and the Rule of Law; Former Senior Exec., GE Capital; Trustee, Santa Fe Institute; Member, Council on Foreign Relations)

**MRS. SUSAN ESCO CHANDLER** (Canonically Resident Presbyter, Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts; Board Member, U of Arizona, Honors College; Board of Overseers, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem; Member, U of Oklahoma, President’s Associates; Fashion Council, Boston Museum of Fine Arts)

**A. CHARLES FORTE** (Senior VP, Financial Advisor, Senior Portfolio Manager Director, Family Wealth Director, Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, LLC)  
**DAVID HENRY JACOBS** (Owner, Stilllife Construction; President, David Jacobs Fine Arts; Director, Indiana University Foundation; Civic Leader)  
**MIRYAM L. KNUTSON** (Educational Consultant, Philanthropist)  
**MIRANDA Y. LIND** (Professional Singer, Coach, Director; Philanthropist; Civic Leader)  
**LYNN J. LOACKER** (Managing Partner, New York Office, Davis Wright Tremaine, LLP)  
**DR. JAMES L. LOWRY** (M.D., F.A.C.R., Radiologist; Director, Opera Southwest)

Three Honorary Directors were also elected: **E. H. CORRIGAN**, long-time member of the Board of Directors and major production underwriter; **GEORGE I. SHIRLEY**, member of the Board of Directors and principal singer between 1962 and 1974; and **JANE J. STIEREN LACY**, underwriter of more than a dozen productions at Santa Fe Opera since 1990 and sponsor of numerous improvements to the physical infrastructure of the company.

*The mission of Santa Fe Opera is to advance the operatic art form by presenting ensemble performances of the highest quality in a unique setting with a varied repertory of new, rarely performed, and standard works; to ensure the excellence of opera's future through apprentice programs for singers, technicians, and arts administrators; and to foster and enrich an understanding and appreciation of opera among a diverse public.*

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