

# **SD OPERA** Media Release

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## **San Diego Opera Awarded Three California Arts Council Grants**

### ***Three grants total \$47,700 and will be used to support Company's Words and Music Program and Student Night at the Opera***

**San Diego, CA** – The California Arts Council has awarded San Diego Opera three grants totaling \$47,700 which will help support the Company's extensive education programs. The first grant is for \$17,100 and helps support the Company's long running *Words and Music (WAM)* program. This specific award will be used towards San Diego Opera's work at Knox Middle School and Memorial Preparatory for Scholars and Athletes. A second grant for \$15,300 will specifically support *WAM* at the La Maestra Center for Youth Advancement.

The *WAM* program works with students to provide instruction in composition, production, and performance; guiding students through the process of telling their own stories through music and drama. *WAM* has reached thousands of elementary, middle, and high school students in 34 schools across the San Diego County region since its inception in 2002 with weekly, standards-based arts instruction over the course of the 36-week school year. The Company expanded the program to offer weekly artist residencies in the City Heights community in 2015. Following the success of a 2017 summer program at La Maestra Center for Youth Development in this neighborhood, San Diego Opera will continue this program in the summer of 2018 which one of the grants allows. San Diego Opera will continue to partner with Teatro Izcalli (a community-based Chicano theater group) for *WAM*.

"This third year of collaboration has been a tremendous growth for both organizations, learning from each other to truly empower the next generation of young people," shares Macedonio Arteaga, Co-founder and Executive Director of Teatro Izcalli.

San Diego Opera's Education programs primarily target traditionally underserved students and students who would otherwise likely lack access to the arts. The Company aims to demonstrate that opera as an art form (essentially the combination of words and music) has relevance for our community, and encourages youth to create their own works of music, theater, and poetry based on their life experiences.

The City Heights community, where the La Maestra Center for Youth Advancement is located, is one of the most ethnically diverse areas of San Diego, with a significant population of resettled refugees from Vietnam, Somalia, and Iraq. Memorial Preparatory is located in the Barrio Logan community of San Diego and Knox Middle School is in the Lincoln Park community, both diverse neighborhoods.

Many students in these communities are exposed at an early age to drugs, gang violence, social exclusion, parent deportations, homelessness, and incarceration. There is a need for area residents to understand and celebrate its youth. The project activities and performances will highlight the lives of these students and the issues most important to them.

San Diego Opera Teaching Artists, trained in Restorative Practices, create a space for youth to reflect, allowing them to open up and share their experiences with peers. Through this process, they can identify which students need connections to additional social-emotional health resources. This approach leads to respect, empathy, empowerment, and problem solving through conversation.

The final grant of \$15,300 is to support the Company's *Student Night at the Opera* program. *Student Night at the Opera* provides students and their chaperones access to the final dress performance of our mainstage productions. The program includes free tickets to the opera and free transportation to the San Diego Civic Theatre from the participating schools and community groups. Each year more than 7,500 students attend these performances through this program which enhances drama/theatre arts, music arts, visual arts, history, and language learning. The Company also provides free docent visits to the classroom that prepares students for their experience at the opera.

**The 2018-2019 International Season**

<i>The Marriage of Figaro</i>	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	October 20, 23, 26, and 28 (mat), 2018
<i>Hansel and Gretel</i>	Engelbert Humperdinck	December 1, 4, 6, 8 (mat), and 9 (mat), 2018
<i>Rigoletto</i>	Giuseppe Verdi	February 2, 5, 8, and 10 (mat), 2019
<i>Three Decembers</i>	Jake Heggie	March 8, 9, 10 (mat), 2019
<i>Carmen</i>	Georges Bizet	March 30, April 2, 5, and 7 (mat) 2019
<i>One Amazing Night – Ailyn Pérez and Stephen Powell</i>		May 15, 2019

**San Diego Opera Mission Statement**

The mission of San Diego Opera is to deliver exceptional vocal performances and exciting, accessible programs to diverse audiences, focusing on community engagement and the transformative power of live performance.

**San Diego Opera Vision Statement**

The San Diego Opera will be recognized internationally as a leading example of adaptability, innovation and sustainability in the operatic arts, promoting diversified programming and unique performance venues with world-class and emerging talent.

**San Diego Opera Core Values Statement**

Through excellence in innovative programming and education, SDO provides a lasting cultural service to the community.

- Our tradition of excellence in fully staged opera is augmented with new models of opera and venues. Our unique and deep commitment to the community propels us to explore ways of increasing affordability and accessibility.
- Through fiscal responsibility and nimble adaptation to the changing marketplace, we protect the future of San Diego Opera.
- Our educational and community involvement coupled with relevant programming will build the audience of the future.

[www.sdopera.org](http://www.sdopera.org)

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