

SD OPERA

Media Release

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San Diego Opera Honors Sarah Brenda Marsh-Rebelo as Honorary Life Director

Only the seventh Life Director honor given in the Company's 55 years

San Diego, CA – San Diego Opera is pleased to announce that San Diego Opera board member for the past 28 years, and Opera Ball Chair for the past two, **Sarah Brenda Marsh-Rebelo**, affectionately known to her friends as Sarah B., has been named Honorary Life Director of the San Diego Opera. This marks only the seventh Life Director honor that the Company has bestowed in its 55-year history which was voted on unanimously at a board meeting on Monday, January 27, 2020.

“I’m thrilled that San Diego Opera is honoring Sarah B.’s longstanding generosity and commitment by naming her an Honorary Life Director. I’ve had the pleasure of working closely with her as a board member, Opera Ball Chair, and Chair of the Board of Directors. In all capacities, she works tirelessly to support the opera, both in time and with generous financial support,” shares San Diego Opera General Director, David Bennett.

Sarah’s support of San Diego Opera began over 33 years ago when Esther Burnham, a Life Director, invited her to the opera. Her love of the arts began much earlier. Sarah was raised in England in a home filled with books, music, and art. “In those days all children, from all walks of life, were raised with an awareness of poetry, reciting and memorizing their favorite poets and listening to music on the radio. The magic of words and music were part of life,” she recalls.

Sarah attended her first opera at the age of ten at the newly built Royal Albert Hall on the banks of the River Thames. When asked to pick her favorite opera she would have to say *Madama Butterfly* “which takes one on a kaleidoscope of emotions, from the beauty of believing to the devastating, self-serving, cruelty of mankind.” Her favorite production of this opera occurred at San Diego Opera in 2003 with Mika Shigematsu and Richard Leech in the lead roles.

In the sixties, after Sarah attended Finishing School, she worked in London as a model for Chanel and other top couture houses for two years. Sarah came to America in the late sixties having been hired by Pan American in London. For two and a half years she flew around the world breathing in every culture she was fortunate to experience. In those years each country was truly distinct, not only in dress, language but their inherent culture and music. She saw Kabuki in Tokyo, the

London stage scene, distinct French chanteuses and remarkable art, dances of the Maori, the drums of Africa and the West Indies, and the atonal music of the Orient. “Our world then was truly colorful and a cauldron of learning experiences,” shares Sarah.

After leaving Pan Am, Hawaii became her home where her beloved son was raised. Sarah discovered surfing and yoga and learned about the jewelry trade from her son's father. “Dealers from Russia, the Silk Route, Japan, India, and Australia traveled to the islands. I learned from them all at a time when few women were in business. It was a magical time,” Sarah remembers. Seven years later Sarah opened a design and manufacturing business in Hong Kong.

In the seventies, she left Hawaii with her son and studied Gemology in California, earning her Graduate Gemology degree, also returning to College to obtain a degree in Literature at the same time. While in Los Angeles she pursued her passion for yoga and studied with the Harriman Institute of Yoga, becoming a Hatha Yoga instructor. Sarah also designed and manufactured a line of women's clothing named *Anything Gauze*. After moving to San Diego in 1981, she married her present husband, John, and completed her BA in Anthropology at UCSD. Working as a Gemologist for twenty five years, Sarah built her own business before retiring in 2002. Sarah then attended SDSU and obtained her MFA in Creative Writing. She is a published poet, and her book 'Over My Shoulder' was published in 2013. Sarah has been honored to serve on the Boards of the Crime Victims Fund, The Armed Services YMCA, San Diego Museum of Art, Rotary and, the San Diego Opera for twenty nine years.

“It was in 1987 that my dear friend Esther Burnham invited me to breakfast and asked me to serve on the Board. I was deeply honored and what a learning experience this has been. I am so proud of our 'new San Diego Opera', the dedication and expertise of our staff, the astounding and ongoing support from the community, who, six years ago when we almost closed, were instrumental in keeping San Diego Opera alive. I feel the music in my body every day. We all respond to beauty, however subtle the shift in our souls, a shift occurs and, in that moment, we are changed for the better. San Diego Opera has been instrumental in enhancing my life and with our talented Director David Bennett at the helm, and our engaged and highly qualified Board, we are here to stay,” says Sarah B.

San Diego Opera 2019-2020 Season

<i>Aida</i>	Giuseppe Verdi	October 19, 22, 25, and 27 (mat), 2019
<i>One Amazing Night with Ailyn Pérez and Joshua Guerrero</i>		December 11, 2019
<i>Hansel & Gretel</i>	Engelbert Humperdinck	February 8, 11, 14, and 16 (mat), 2020
<i>The Bel Canto Trio</i>		March 4, 2020
<i>Aging Magician</i>	Paola Prestini	March 13 and 14 (evening and mat), 2020
<i>The Barber of Seville</i>	Gioachino Rossini	April 25, 28, May 1 and 3 (mat) 2020
<i>The Falling and the Rising</i>	Zach Redler	May 8, 9, and 10 (mat) 2020

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

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.

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