

# **SD OPERA** Media Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **San Diego Opera's Drive-In *La bohème* Successes**

***Zero cases of COVID-19 transmission identified around  
production***

***Employed over 300 individuals, many unemployed since  
March***

***Two-sold out performances, with record breaking  
number of new ticket buyers***

### **Darlene Marcos Shiley – Lead Production Sponsor**

**San Diego, CA** – San Diego Opera is excited to share some final information about the Company's series of drive-in performances of *La bohème* which was held in the Pechanga Arena San Diego parking lot for four performances from October 24, 2020 through November 1, 2020. These performances marked some of the first live, in-person, presentations of opera in the world since COVID-19 silenced the industry in March.

Already a popular and critical success, the Company is pleased to be able to announce that zero cases of COVID-19 can be traced back to rehearsals and performances of *La bohème*. To do this, San Diego Opera followed strict protocols laid out by the County and unions which included the quarantining of international artists, mandatory testing, daily health screens and check-ins, mandatory face coverings and shielding, as well as specific staging instructions that kept singers properly distanced while singing to one another. The San Diego Symphony, San Diego Opera's musical partners, also enforced strict protocols including socially distanced musicians as well as bespoke plexiglass constructions in the orchestra pit to shield musicians from aerosols released

from the brass and woodwinds. The Company also enforced strict protocols for attendees requiring them to remain in their vehicles for the duration of the opera and ensuring the experience was as “touch-less” as possible, distributing tickets and programs via email, enabling supertitles to be read in real-time via smart devices, and pre-recording pre-opera lectures shown on large screens throughout the lot.

The return of San Diego Opera performances also brought significant economic impact to the community, providing over 300 jobs to artists, stagehands as well as parking, security, and janitorial staff. For many, this was the first work they received since the start of the Pandemic. Some of the third parties engaged by San Diego Opera for this production include Pechanga Arena San Diego, ShowTec, Ace Parking, Diamond Porta Potties, Allied Security, Insane Impact Screen Rentals, among others.

In terms of ticket sales, two of the four performances were sold-out at a capacity of 450 cars and the other two performances sold at 96% and 85% capacity. Over 34% of ticket buyers were first time San Diego Opera ticket buyers, setting a record for new attendees to the opera. Based on patron surveys it is estimated over 3,000 people saw *La bohème* over its four performance run and 99% of those who attended felt entirely safe by the protocols San Diego Opera enforced. The performances were attended by a significant number of local and national arts leaders, many who attended to explore options of presenting drive-in performances to their respective audiences.

“There are many things to be proud of with our recent drive-in *La bohème*,” shares San Diego’s General Director, David Bennett. “It was incredibly strong musically and dramatically, gave much-needed employment to many, and provided an opportunity for our audiences to enjoy a communal experience after spending so much time alone. But most importantly, we did this with zero COVID-19 positive results. We proved that with good planning, safety and artistic ingenuity can co-exist.”

Since the emergence of COVID-19 San Diego Opera has continued to closely monitor the recommendations of public health and government officials and realizes that a traditional season in a traditional theatre is impossible to contemplate right now. Because of this, the Company developed this alternative plan after learning about other safe and successful drive-in live performances in both Europe and the United States. The Company is currently exploring options for presenting the rest of the season safely and will announce these decisions shortly.

### **Get Connected**

#### ***San Diego Opera Podcast Series***

These insights into the singers and productions can be enjoyed by opera fans as well as those who are new to the art form. Casual and fun, this is a great way to learn about our artists and the operas they star in. Watch online at <http://www.sdopera.org/Company/Education/Podcasts>. These videos are also available on our YouTube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/SanDiegoOpera>

#### ***San Diego Opera on Twitter***

Get frequent updates about San Diego Opera and opera in general by following us on Twitter. Follow tweets from backstage during a performance and learn about special offers and contests before anyone else by following us @SDOpera.

### ***San Diego Opera on Facebook***

San Diego Opera's Facebook page offers a place for fellow opera fans to discuss performances, opera news, connect with other fans and get up-to-date information on upcoming events. Look for "San Diego Opera" at <https://www.facebook.com/SanDiegoOpera/>

### ***San Diego Opera on YouTube***

Now viewers can watch a large portion of San Diego Opera's programming at their convenience on YouTube. Archived versions of *OperaTalk!*, *Stars in the Salon*, *Opera Spotlight*, our video podcast series and much more can be found on the San Diego Opera channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/SanDiegoOpera>

### ***San Diego Opera on Instagram***

A picture is worth a thousand words! Take a look at what happens backstage and in the office on San Diego Opera's Instagram page. <http://instagram.com/sandiegoopera>

Please visit [www.sdopera.org](http://www.sdopera.org) or call 619.533.7000 for more information or to view our FAQs about this event.

### **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.

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

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