

SD OPERA Media Release

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NEA Awards San Diego Opera \$35,000 Education Grant

Funds will be used to support Words and Music Program in local Title I schools

San Diego, CA – San Diego Opera is honored to announce it has received a \$35,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to help fund the Company’s **Words and Music Program**. Words and Music is the Company’s artist-in-residence program that services Title I schools in San Diego, CA. Professional teaching artists provide weekly, year-round instruction in composing, producing, and performing original dramatic works set to music. Through this program, each student experiences the power of telling his or her own story through words and music, leading to an understanding that making great art, like making a great life, is about making great choices.

“San Diego Opera’s Words and Music program had a big impact on my students this year,” shares Serafin Parades, Music Director at Memorial Preparatory School. “The students are completely focused on their production about a day in the life in Logan Heights. The students are thriving as ensemble singers and are successfully collaborating on this project. For most, it is their first experience with ensemble singing and theater. I look forward to continuing our partnership with San Diego Opera and its extraordinary teaching artists for many years to come.”

The Words and Music program reaches students at elementary, middle, and high schools. The program has provided thousands of students in grades 6-12 with weekly instruction in opera composition since the program began in 1999. The program recently expanded to include (1) year-long artist residencies providing standards-based instruction in composition, production, and performance, (2) a writing component that encourages students to “tell their own story” through opera by exploring their heritage, celebrating cultural diversity, and valuing cultural proficiency, (3) arts integration curriculum, and (4) student performances open to the public at the end of the school year. San Diego Opera is proud to partner with Teatro Izcalli, a Chicana/o comedy troupe, at specific school sites.

“I am a 14-year-old boy that goes to Hoover High School located in City Heights. I have been working with San Diego Opera and Teatro Izcalli. They help me and the other students in my

class understand what we need to learn about theater, movies, plays,” shares Manny, a student artist participating in the Words and Music Program. “With the help of musicians I will have emotional and rap music to fit the story of my play. I wrote a play about a 13-year-old boy that overcame “An Odd Year.” It’s a story of a young boy and his family that get evicted from their home. They move from place to place looking for somewhere to live. The family encounters a lot of problems that year that make the situation worse. Finally a miracle happens and the family finds a home.”

Words and Music is currently being taught at three local schools as part of the 2015-2016 school year. This grant enables the Company to expand its services to additional Title I schools in the 2016-2017 school year. The schools currently receiving the Words and Music Program are **Hoover High School** in the San Diego Unified School District, **Harborside Elementary** in the Chula Vista School District, and **Memorial Preparatory School** in the San Diego Unified School District. These residencies culminate in a school and community-wide performance open to the public. Dates for the 2015-2016 school year performances are:

Harborside Elementary School – Thursday, May 26, 2016 at 6:00 PM. 681 Naples St, Chula Vista, CA 91910

Hoover High School – Friday, June 10, 2016 at 6:30 PM. 4474 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego, CA 92115

Memorial Preparatory School – Wednesday, June 15, 2016 at 6:15 PM. 2850 Logan Ave, San Diego, CA 92113

All events are free to the public. Seating is first come, first served. (If media wishes to attend these performances please RSVP to Edward.Wilensky@sdopera.com to arrange access and interviews with staff and students).

Schools participating in this program for the 2016-2017 school year will be announced in the Fall.

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.

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