

# SD OPERA Media Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## ***As One* Continues San Diego Opera's 2017-2018 Season as Part of the Company's d etour Series**

***Baritone Kelly Markgraf (Hannah before) and mezzo-soprano Blythe Gaissert (Hannah after) share the part of the sole transgender protagonist in this tale of discovery and acceptance***

***Company to perform the first time at the Joan B. Kroc Theatre***

***KPBS-TV to air live performance of As One on Saturday, November 11, 2017***

**San Diego, CA** – San Diego Opera's 2017-2018 season continues on **November 10, 2017 at the Joan B. Kroc Theatre** with *As One*, part of the Company's d etour Series. San Diego Opera's d etour Series premiered in the 2016-2017 season and is dedicated to exploring lesser known operas and works that fall outside of the Company's ongoing tradition of presenting grand operas at the San Diego Civic Theatre.

*As One* is by composer **Laura Kaminsky** with a libretto by **Mark Campbell** and **Kimberly Reed**, *As One* is a chamber opera in which two voices - Hannah after (mezzo-soprano) and Hannah before (baritone) - share the part of a sole transgender protagonist. Fifteen songs comprise the three-part narrative; with empathy and humor, as they trace Hannah's experiences from her youth in a small town to her college years on the West Coast, and finally to Norway where she is surprised at what she learns about herself.

Each performance of *As One* will be followed by Act II, a talk-back with the cast and the creators of the opera, including filmmaker and co-librettist Kimberly Reed, who made the renowned documentary, *Prodigal Sons*.

Making her Company debut in the role of Hannah after is mezzo-soprano **Blythe Gaissert**, who created the role for the opera's world premiere at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. She will be joined by baritone **Kelly Markgraf**, also in a Company debut, as Hannah before. **Kyle Lang**, a longtime assistant director for San Diego Opera, will make his directing debut. **Bruce Stasyna**, the Company's current Chorus Master, will conduct the **Hausmann Quartet** for these performances. *As One* opens on Friday, November 10, 2017 at 7 PM with additional performances on Saturday, November 11 at 7 PM and Sunday, November 11 at 1 PM (please note that this differs from the Company's usual 2 PM start time for matinees). This is a new production of *As One* designed and owned by San Diego Opera.

*As One* will have a live televised broadcast on Saturday, November 11, 2017 at 7 PM on KPBS 2 (15.2, Cox 811, Spectrum 1277). After the live broadcast, viewers can watch *As One* online at [www.kpbs.org](http://www.kpbs.org). There is no radio broadcast of *As One*.

Pre-production photos can be found online at: <https://sandiegoopera.smugmug.com/San-Diego-Opera-20172018-Preproduction-Artwork/>

## **The Cast**

### **Kelly Markgraf**, Hannah before

San Diego Opera debut. American baritone Kelly Markgraf has sung major roles with Brooklyn Academy of Music, Aspen Music Festival, Austin Opera, Madison Opera, Apollo's Fire Baroque Orchestra, Kentucky Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre and Pittsburgh Opera, as well as internationally with Opéra de Lausanne, Switzerland. He has bowed with the San Francisco Symphony under Michael Tilson Thomas, the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel, the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Charles Dutoit, and the New York Philharmonic under Alan Gilbert. He has performed the role of Hannah before with Opera Colorado at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Other notable roles include Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* with Florentine Opera, Don Pizarro in *Fidelio* and the title role of *Don Giovanni* with Madison Opera.

### **Blythe Gaissert**, Hannah after

San Diego Opera debut. American mezzo-soprano Blythe Gaissert's recent engagements include Hannah after with Opera Colorado, Mother Marie in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* for Des Moines Metro Opera, Maddalena in *Rigoletto* with Lyrique en Mer Festival, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* with Sarasota Opera, the Verdi *Requiem* with Duluth Symphony, workshop performances at American Opera Projects and the world premiere at the Brooklyn Academy of Music of *As One*, Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* for Tulsa Opera, and the title role of *Carmen* with Lake George Opera. On the concert stage, she has appeared with the Asheville Symphony Orchestra in *El Amor Brujo*, Cincinnati Symphony for Zemlinsky's *Psalm 83*, Colonial Symphony in *Candide*, Florence Symphony and the Garden State Philharmonic for Handel's *Messiah*, and World Symphony Orchestra in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*. She has participated in a number of notable programs for young artists, including San Francisco Opera's Merola Program, Cincinnati Opera, Lake George Opera, Sarasota Opera, Aspen Opera Theatre Centre. She is the 2010 Winner of the First Prize of the National Opera Association.

### **The Hausmann Quartet**, Orchestra

The Hausmann Quartet was formed in the summer of 2004 at Lyricafest in New Jersey, and has since become known for its powerful, dynamic performances and commitment to community engagement. Now in its 11th season, the quartet has established itself an integral part of the cultural life of Southern California as faculty Artists-in-Residence at San Diego State University and Ensemble-in-Residence at

Mainly Mozart. The Hausmann Quartet has won prizes at the Beverly Hills Auditions, Rotenburg International Chamber Music Competition and the Morrison International Fellowship award as well as being one of only two American quartets chosen to participate in both the Beijing International Quartet Competition and the Banff International Quartet Competition. They enjoy a busy and varied performance schedule of concerts throughout North America and Asia, with recent appearances including Art of Élan, Berkeley Chamber Performances, Noe Valley Chamber Music, Taiwan National University, Mainly Mozart's Evolution, Rockport Music at Shalin Liu Performance Center, San Francisco Performances, Morrison Series at San Francisco State, Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts at the Chicago Cultural Center, Colours of Music in Barrie, Ontario and Sound of Autumn Series in Shijiazhuang, China. With a deep belief in community engagement, the Hausmann Quartet has presented a variety of creative educational outreach programs throughout the United States and developed a strong presence in Southern California, beginning in 2010 with their appointment as the fellowship quartet at La Jolla Music Society's SummerFest and the Joseph Fisch and Joyce Axelrod Quartet-in-Residence at SDSU. Most recently they have launched and directed a series of programs in the San Diego area with support from the Irvine Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts and ACMP, including the Chamber Music Institute (an immersive chamber music training program for young musicians), the Living Room Concerts and annual Seminar (a coaching and masterclass series for adult amateur chamber musicians) and participatory jam sessions in senior centers and homeless shelters in collaboration with the San Diego Rescue Mission, Resounding Joy and Mainly Mozart. They have partnered with organizations such as Chamber Music Connection, Oakland School for the Arts, La Jolla Music Society, Rockport Music in Massachusetts, International Music Foundation in Chicago, Tuesday Musical Association, and Lyrica Chamber Music in New Jersey, to bring musical programming to populations of all ages. Past activities have included community residencies in Ohio, North Carolina, and Massachusetts, a children's concert series in Chicago's inner-city, and Mountain Lakes NJ, as well as a residency at Stanford University's Educational Program for Gifted Youth Summer Institute. In 2012 the quartet founded the Hausmann Chamber Music Program (HCMP), a semester program and summer festival for students of all ages to learn chamber music, attend performances, and participate in workshops given by the quartet and guest artists. The Hausmann Quartet has become a vibrant member of the San Diego arts community with a dedication to enlivening and enriching the city's cultural landscape. The Hausmann Quartet has been fortunate to collaborate with a variety of artists including the Alexander String Quartet, Borromeo String Quartet, Cecilia String Quartet, pianists James Tocco, Jeremy Denk, and Victor Rosenbaum, violinists Ani Kavafian and Laura Bossert, violists Toby Appel, Paul Neubauer, Cynthia Phelps, and Rivka Golani, cellists Terry King, Gary Hoffman, and Paul Katz and clarinetist Jose Franche-Ballester. Recent collaborations have included performances with pianists Anne-Marie McDermott, Stephen Prutsman, Lydia Artymiw, David Kaplan, Grace Fong, violinist Lin He, and cellist Angela Lee. The members of the Hausmann Quartet are violinists Isaac Allen and Bram Goldstein, violist Angela Choong and cellist Alex Greenbaum. The quartet is named after Robert Hausmann, the eminent 19th century German cellist and founding member of the Joachim Quartet.

**Bruce Stasyna, Conductor**

San Diego Opera Conducting debut. Bruce Stasyna has been on the conducting rosters of the New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, and Sugar Creek Opera, and has held positions as Chorus Master for New York City Opera, Minnesota Opera, Wolf Trap Opera and Des Moines Opera. He was Artistic Director and Principal Conductor for the Green Mountain Opera Festival, and Head of Music and Director of the Young Artist Program at Palm Beach Opera. He has collaborated on many notable North American premieres including *Anna Nicole*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Orazi e Curiazi*, and *Joseph Merrick dit Elephant Man*. As a pianist he has performed with such artists as Marcello Giordani, Deborah Voigt, J'nai Bridges, Irene Roberts, Marina Costa-Jackson, and Richard Troxell. The Canadian born conductor is currently the Chorus Master and Music Administrator for San Diego Opera, Chorus Master and Assistant Conductor for Washington Concert Opera, and Music Director of Vero Beach Opera.

**Kyle Lang, Stage Director**

San Diego Opera directing debut. Mr. Lang has been an assistant director for the Company starting with *La bohème* in 2015 and in that capacity worked on *Nixon in China*, *Don Giovanni*, *Tosca*, and *Falstaff*. His directing credits include *La bohème* for Virginia Opera, *The Bear* for Wexford Festival Opera, *Don Quixote and the Duchess* for Central City Opera, *L'enfant et les sortilège* and *Gianni Schicchi* for Simpson College, *Dead Man Walking* for Opera Fayetteville, *Apprentice Showcase* for Santa Fe Opera, *The Face on the Barroom Floor* for Tulsa Opera, and *Short Works* for Central City Opera. His choreographic credits include *Vanessa* for Wexford Festival Opera, *The Merry Widow* for Boston Lyric Opera and Utah Opera, *La traviata* for Fort Worth Opera, Des Moines Opera, and Lyric Opera of Baltimore, *Jenůfa* for Des Moines Metro Opera, *The Last Savage* for Indiana University, *Sweeney Todd* for Virginia Opera, *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Virginia Opera, *Carmen* for Opera Omaha, *Falstaff* and *The Marriage of Figaro* for Virginia Opera, and *Die Fledermaus* for Opera Memphis. He is privileged to have danced as a soloist and in the corps de ballet with ZviDance, the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and with Christopher K. Morgan, performing in countries across Europe, South America, and the Middle East.

**Performance Schedule**

Friday	November 10, 2017	7 PM
Saturday	November 11, 2017	7 PM
Sunday	November 12, 2017	1 PM*

\*Please note earlier start time for the Sunday matinee of *As One*

**Get Connected For *As One*****Pre-Opera Lectures**

These 30-minute informative lectures take place one hour prior to every performance and offer wonderful insights into the production audience members are about to see. These lectures are free to all ticket holders and take place in the theater.

***San Diego Opera Podcast Series***

Get to know the artists and operas of the 2017-2018 Season. 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 happen backstage and in the office on San Diego Opera's Instagram page. <http://instagram.com/sandiegoopera>

### **Purchasing Tickets**

Only subscriptions to the 2017-2018 season are now on sale. A subscription for the three Main Stage operas begins at a low \$114. A subscription for the three dētour Series events starts at \$75. Subscriptions start at \$189 for a full series including the three Main Stage operas and the dētour Series operas and concert. Single tickets will go on sale in the summer. Casts and repertoire are subject to change.

Senior citizen discounts of 15% are available to the Main Stage series on Tuesday and Friday subscription packages. Senior citizen discounts of 15% are available to the dētour Series on Saturday subscription packages.

Military discounts (active and retired) of 50% are available to the Main Stage series on Tuesday and Friday subscription packages. Military discounts of 50% are available to the dētour Series on Saturday subscription packages.

For information about single tickets please visit [www.sdopera.org](http://www.sdopera.org). Single ticket prices will be announced in the summer.

### **The 2017-2018 International Season**

<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	Gilbert & Sullivan	October 14, 17, 20, and 22 (mat), 2017
<i>As One</i>	Laura Kaminsky	November 10, 11 and 12 (1 PM, mat), 2017
<i>Maria de Buenos Aires</i>	Ástor Piazzolla	January 26, 27 and 28 (mat), 2018
<i>Turandot</i>	Giacomo Puccini	February 24, 27, March 2, and 4 (mat), 2018
<i>Florecia en el Amazonas</i>	Daniel Catán	March 17, 20, 23, and 25 (mat) 2018
<i>One Amazing Night – René Barbera and Lise Lindstrom in Concert</i>		May 5, 2018

### **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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