



*Opera San José*

## History

Opera San José was founded in 1984 by Irene Dalis, who was the general director for thirty years, retiring in June of 2014. Larry Hancock, who has been with the organization even before it was incorporated, became the general director on July 1, 2014. The feature that makes Opera San José unique in the United States is its resident company of principal artists, formed in 1988, through which outstanding operatic artists in the first years of their careers are identified and awarded annual contracts to perform leading roles in mainstage productions and to participate in school and community-wide educational activities. These singers are groomed for international performing careers. Due to the resident nature of the company, modeled after the German regional opera company, these artists build substantial professional repertoire, are coached by resident and guest conductors and stage directors, and are prepared to meet the demands of a successful operatic career.

Opera San José maintains three performance programs: a mainstage subscription series of four productions; a richly varied curriculum of educational programs for youth and adults; and community-wide performances that include programs designed to serve those who have been marginalized by society, including the disadvantaged elderly, troubled youth, the disabled, and ethnic and racial minorities.

By the conclusion of the 2016–2017 season (its 33rd), Opera San José will have presented 160 opera productions on its mainstage in downtown San José, including five world premieres among the fifty-six titles in its repertoire. The number of K-12 educational performances over the same period amounts to almost 3,000. Community programming for adult audiences totals nearly 2,900 performances. Audience figures for the 2015–2016 season totaled approximately 35,000 through all areas of company programming.

Well managed from its inception, Opera San José has never had a deficit. Rather, the company has continually nurtured a modest cash reserve and has acquired, with no debt, two 24,000 sq. ft. operations facilities, and two apartment buildings (fourteen units total) for free artist housing.

Opera San José is funded by the city of San José and many major corporations and foundations including Applied Materials, The Packard Humanities Institute, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Getty Foundation, and many others.

