

**KHORI DASTOOR ASSUMES GENERAL DIRECTOR ROLE,  
UNVEILS GROUNDBREAKING LINE-UP FOR  
OPERA SAN JOSÉ  
2020-21 SEASON**

**September 12, 2020 – May 2, 2021**

SAN JOSE, CA (21 January 2020) – **Opera San José** supporters gathered at the historic California Theatre tonight to welcome its new General Director **Khori Dastoor** and hear her unveil the company's new strategic vision and ground-breaking line-up for the 2020-21 season, including new productions, company premieres, artist debuts, and cultural collaborations in four mainstage productions – including one with Broadway roots, a company first. Last spring, the Opera San José Board of Directors announced the appointment of Dastoor as the company's third general director, to succeed retiring general director Larry Hancock. She assumed the position October 1, 2019, becoming one of only six women, and the only woman of color, leading a major opera company in the US (budget over \$3 million). Since then she has been overseeing all aspects of artistic planning and business operations, and now announces her first season to be staged September 2020 through May 2021 at the beautifully restored California Theatre in downtown San Jose. Noting that Opera San José has been an integral part of the cultural fabric of the greater San Jose area for over thirty-five years, said Dastoor, "Our current charge is to elevate the company as a vibrant artistic incubator in the heart of Silicon Valley," announcing what she described as a season of renewal, growth, and, above all, impassioned music making and storytelling.

Dastoor went on to enthusiastically describe her vision for the future, noting, "In its next chapter, Opera San José is committed to expanding access to the art form for more residents of our region, expanding and developing our programmatic offerings to better serve the diverse community of the valley, and incubating the next generation of singers, musicians, designers, composers, directors and craftspeople that will engine the future of operatic expression in America. To that end, I am thrilled to have raised over \$800k in launch funding (with more to come) to usher in a new era of growth, engagement and excellence."

Also announced were new curtain times: in the 2020-21 season evening performances will begin at 7:30pm, and matinees move to 2pm. Said Dastoor, "We heard from many patrons that they would prefer to get home earlier, and were happy to respond with earlier show times."

NEW GENERAL DIRECTOR KHORI DASTOOR  
UNVEILS OPERA SAN JOSÉ'S 2020-21 SEASON  
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**KHORI DASTOOR**

Dastoor has been affiliated with Opera San José since joining its resident ensemble of principal artists in 2007. After enjoying a vibrant international opera career as a lyric soprano, California native Dastoor returned home in 2012 to pursue a life in artistic administration. She joined the staff of Opera San José in 2013 as Artistic Advisor to the General Director under founder Irene Dalis, and then as Director of Artistic Planning under Larry Hancock where she assumed primary responsibility for casting and artist recruitment. During Ms. Dastoor's tenure with the company, she has prioritized role debuts, offering San José audiences first look at exciting new artists who have gone onto international careers. In her capacity as Associate Director of The Packard Humanities Institute (PHI), she has also produced some of the biggest successes in the company's history, including the American premiere of Alma Deutcher's *Cinderella*, and the critically-acclaimed new productions Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* and Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. She has also served as Program Officer at PHI, responsible for initiatives encompassing arts, music, and archaeology, and as Director of the San Francisco District of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

**2020-21 SEASON**

**THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO**

*A British Raj reimagining of this brilliant opera buffa*  
September 12 – 27, 2020

Launching the season will be an all new production of Mozart's ***The Marriage of Figaro***, transported to **colonial India during Victorian Imperial rule**. Sexual politics and class resentments play out through the prism of shifting power and revolution, culminating in a riotously colorful Indian wedding that will bring the exuberance and festivity of Bollywood to the California Theatre stage. Brad Dalton, director of the upcoming *Magic Flute* and last season's thrilling *Madama Butterfly* puts his stamp on this production, and Mozart specialist Francesco Lecce-Chong conducts the season opener in his company debut. Casting includes soprano Maya Kherani as Susanna and baritone Efraín Solís as Figaro, with baritone Eugene Brancoveanu and soprano Maria Natale as the estranged Count and Countess, and soprano Indira Mahajan making her OSJ debut and role debut as Marcellina.

**CARMEN**

*Fiery flamenco joins brilliant singing to reignite this classic*  
November 14 - 29, 2020

Opera San José will pull out all the stops in **creating the most memorable production of Bizet's *Carmen* in the company's history**. Reimagined by Lillian Groag in a new collaboration with the acclaimed Flamenco Society of San José, and conducted by Music Director Joseph Marcheso, this vibrant production will fuse dance, singing, and drama, bringing to vivid life the story of the headstrong, intoxicating seductress and the man who's fallen under her spell. Widely accepted as "the perfect opera", this passionate tale explores and examines the choices of its defiant heroine, whose insatiable quest for freedom and rebellion seals her tragic fate. Announced casting includes Eugene Brancoveanu as Escamillo and Adrian Kramer as Don José.

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## SALOME

*Daring, rarely performed opera in a dynamic new production*

February 13 – 28, 2021

February's opera is sure to be one of the most anticipated events of the season with **the company premiere of Richard Strauss' shocking and ecstatic Salome**. From the fevered imaginations of Oscar Wilde and Strauss, this one-act 100-minute opera shook audiences with its cinematic pacing, voluptuous music, and graphic story of Salome's relentless and unquenchable desire for John the Baptist. For this milestone OSJ will create a dynamic production that blurs boundaries and invites the audience to re-examine the unthinkable. Visionary director Matthew Ozawa will make his OSJ debut creating a one-of-a-kind experience. Music Director Joseph Marcheso conducts this ravishing masterpiece, with soprano Maria Natale making her role debut as Salome. Additional casting announced includes mezzo-soprano Lisa Chavez and tenor Adrian Kramer, both in role debuts as Herodias and Narraboth, with Eugene Brancoveanu debuting as Jochanaan (at select performances).

## WEST SIDE STORY

*Thrilling music and vivid dancing explode on our stage*

April 17 – May 2, 2021

Closing this unforgettable season, Opera San José presents possibly **the most beloved musical of all time**, Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's ***West Side Story***. This classic American tale of two star-crossed lovers and the prejudices that keep them apart bursts with passion, humor, dancing and some of the most memorable music ever written. Director Michael Shell whose acclaimed *Silent Night* wowed OSJ audiences, returns to create a gritty, iconic production for the Company's first-ever musical. An opportunity to see this masterwork as its creators intended, *West Side Story* will be performed in its original version by classically trained young singers with the full sound and impact of the Opera San José Orchestra. Acclaimed soprano Vanessa Becerra will star as Maria, with new choreography by Ben Needham-Wood, the acclaimed dancer and choreographer affiliated with Smuin Ballet.

In addition, Dastoor hinted at additional programming, events, and other collaborations with local arts groups that will enable music lovers to encounter Opera San José in a variety of settings, with more details to come in the months ahead.

For more information or to purchase subscriptions (\$140-\$550 for four operas), the public can visit **[operasj.org](http://operasj.org)** or call **(408) 437-4450** (open Monday through Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm). Subscriptions are on sale now; single tickets will go on sale in June 2020.

**Opera San José**, performing at the beautiful California Theatre in downtown San José, is a professional, regional opera company that is unique in the United States. Maintaining a resident company of artists and supporting emerging talent in role debuts, Opera San José specializes in

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showcasing the finest young professional singers in the nation. In addition to mainstage performances, Opera San José maintains extensive educational programs in schools and in the community at large and offers preview lectures and Introduction to Opera talks for all mainstage productions.

**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** **Opera San José's** new General Director **Khori Dastoor** has unveiled a groundbreaking line-up for the company's 2020-21 season, including new productions, company premieres, artist debuts, and cultural collaborations in four mainstage productions – including one with Broadway roots, a company first. The line-up includes: an all-new vibrant and riotously colorful production of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* reset in India during Victorian Imperial rule, a fiery re-imagined *Carmen* in collaboration with the Flamenco Society of San Jose, the company debut of Strauss' shocking and ecstatic *Salome*, and a brilliant production of the Leonard Bernstein/Stephen Sondheim classic *West Side Story*.

**WHEN:** **September 12, 2020 – May 2, 2021**

**WHERE:** **California Theatre**  
345 South 1<sup>st</sup> St., San José CA

**TICKETS:** Subscriptions (\$140-\$550 for four operas) are on sale now; single tickets will go on sale in June 2020.

**INFO:** For more information or to purchase subscriptions, the public can visit **operasj.org** or call **(408) 437-4450** (open Monday through Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm).

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**MEDIA:** Contact Sydney Albin, Carla Befera & Co.  
650.327.1200 | [sydney@cb-pr.com](mailto:sydney@cb-pr.com)

**PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos are available here:  
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/operasanjose>