

# GENERAL DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

## TO MY OSJ FAMILY,

I am so excited to have you join us for the first musical Opera San José has produced in its rich and wonderful history. *West Side Story* is an American masterpiece and one that belongs on our stage—its story and music as grand as opera itself. Phenomenal singing, dancing and acting await us as our incredible cohort of resident and guest artists take the stage.

The history of the American experience certainly is as monumental as the operatic form; the music of Leonard Bernstein and lyrics of Stephen Sondheim capture the grandeur in this master work. The fundamental question of what defines an American citizen and how our communities are strengthened by our multicultural identities lies at the heart of the piece. We are thrilled to add the operatic voice to this masterpiece. With some of the most cherished music ever written, *West Side Story* is a glorious piece of American musical art that transcends so many boundaries, including that of language. In recognition of the vibrant diversity of both the characters of *West Side Story* and the community of San Jose, OSJ is proud of the addition of Spanish supertitles for this production.

Only through the generosity of patrons like yourself are we able to keep the music and dancing alive. The legacy of Irene Dalis lives on with our fantastic resident artists onstage today, conquering new roles and achieving fantastic artistic heights. The steadfast support of our patrons and a growing community audience allow our artists to thrive—taking huge leaps forward with their craft and artistry. Throughout the rehearsal process, as we prepare for opening night, we have been dreaming of our audience. Planning how our work can delight, thrill and inspire our community makes even long days in rehearsal a joyous experience.

In my first few months as General Director, I have been moved by the interconnected and engaged community of supporters who sustain this unique gem of a company. Culture is something we build together, with and for a beloved audience, and by weaving together the strengths and talents of so many artists and technicians. Opera is not easy to make, but it is very easy to love—and I'm so grateful to be living in a place where this art form is cherished.

A debt of gratitude is owed to our staff, orchestra, front of house team, artists, production staff, company members, board members and community partners whose dedication to the art form, passion and belief in opera kept us steadfast through the challenges of returning to live performance. Already we are dreaming of our next performances with all of you, back in the gorgeous California Theater.

Thank you and enjoy the performance!

With gratitude,



**SHAWNA LUCEY**

GENERAL DIRECTOR & CEO

