

## OPERA SAN JOSÉ UNVEILS BEHIND-THE-SCENES DOCUMENTARY OF CREATING OPERA DURING COVID-19: THE MAKING OF *THREE DECEMBERS*

SAN JOSE, CA (25 November 2020) – In an extraordinary effort to continue supporting artists and presenting art, even in the midst of the pandemic, **Opera San José** launched a massive undertaking to safely create and share a brand new fully-staged production of Jake Heggie’s modern opera, ***Three Decembers***. Its extensive efforts and thoughts from the composer, performers, and creative teams involved are chronicled in the behind-the-scenes documentary, ***The Making of THREE DECEMBERS***, now available for viewing. Embracing the need for digital innovation driven by the pandemic, Opera San José General Director Khori Dastoor undertook to create and capture a first-class production, which stars internationally renowned mezzo-soprano **Susan Graham** in the central role, alongside celebrated Opera San José Resident Artists soprano **Maya Kherani** and baritone **Efraín Solís**, offered via on-demand streaming beginning December 3, 2020. Says Dastoor, “Something that’s been incredibly terrifying and devastating at first has transformed – by our patrons and by our team members – into something really exciting. A new chapter for Opera San José.” For more information or to view the documentary, the public may visit [operasj.org/three-decembers](https://operasj.org/three-decembers). Access to *The Making of THREE DECEMBERS* is free of charge.

In the documentary, performers speak to the professional devastation COVID-19 has wrecked on the arts, and the personal toll that came with being unable to perform. In an industry where engagements are booked three to five years ahead, to suddenly find themselves without a singing opportunity for the foreseeable future was a shock. Says Susan Graham in the piece, “To be back doing what I do, it’s a miracle. I’m so proud of this company and its resourcefulness and creativity to actually move forward in these times and make this happen.” Adds composer Jake Heggie, “When Khori said they were actually going to do this, my heart just exploded with joy that these performers, that this company was going to have the opportunity to do the work that they do.”

## OPERA SAN JOSÉ ANNOUNCES VIRTUAL PERFORMANCE OF JAKE HEGGIE’S “THREE DECEMBERS”

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Dastoor envisioned this pioneering production as an opportunity to utilize the know-how of the company’s Silicon Valley environs to make music performances available during this crisis. Partnering with Flying Moose Pictures, the company carefully studied all health best-practices protocols and assembled a team to create a safe performance space to achieve a world-class digital capture. The participating artists quarantined and created their own social pod, foregoing interaction with family and friends during the project, allowing them to safely interact. Rehearsals were initially held virtually, until final staging when the singing artists were in the performance space, separated by crew and musicians with plexiglass barriers. The documentary takes viewers behind the scenes for entry protocols, creation and placement of safety barriers, and other extraordinary measures taken for the health and safety of everyone involved in the project. Among the measures taken: in addition to frequent COVID testing, all cast and crew passed through daily temperature checks and adhered to strict masking and social distancing protocols. The filming space was cleaned/disinfected continually, and all crew wore personal protective equipment (PPE). A dedicated COVID-19 safety officer remained on-site throughout the entire process to ensure that safety measures were strictly observed, enabling the company to proceed with the creation of this pioneering new production.

The **Heiman Digital Media Studio** was made possible by a generous lead donation from Opera San José trustee Peggy Heiman in honor of her late husband, devoted Opera San José supporter Fred Heiman. This production of *Three Decembers* was made possible by the Carol Franc Buck Foundation and the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation. Opera San José is supported, in part, by a Cultural Affairs grant from the City of San Jose, and Applied Materials Foundation.

**Opera 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 showcasing the finest young professional singers in the nation. In addition to mainstage performances, Opera San José maintains extensive educational programs in schools and

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in the community at large and offers preview lectures and Introduction to Opera talks for all mainstage productions.

### FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

**WHAT:** In an extraordinary effort to continue supporting artists and presenting art, even in the midst of the pandemic, **Opera San José** launched a massive undertaking to safely create and share a brand new fully-staged production of Jake Heggie’s modern opera, ***Three Decembers***. Its extensive efforts and thoughts from the composer, performers, and creative teams involved are chronicled in the behind-the-scenes documentary, ***The Making of THREE DECEMBERS***, now available for viewing. Embracing the need for digital innovation driven by the pandemic, Opera San José General Director Khorī Dastoor undertook to create and capture a first-class production, which stars internationally renowned mezzo-soprano **Susan Graham** in the central role, alongside celebrated Opera San José Resident Artists soprano **Maya Kherani** and baritone **Efraín Solís**, offered via on-demand streaming beginning December 3, 2020.

**TICKETS:** FREE. Available to view at [operasj.org/three-decembers](https://operasj.org/three-decembers)

**INFO:** [operasj.org](https://operasj.org) or call **(408) 437-4450** (Monday through Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm).

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