

## OPERA SAN JOSÉ APPOINTS TECH LEADER

# NILAB HESSABI

## TO ITS BOARD OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SAN JOSE, CA (20 February 2024) — Tech leader **Nilab Hessabi** has joined the Board of Trustees of **Opera San José**, the Silicon Valley arts organization now celebrating its 40th season serving as an artistic incubator for established and emerging artists and administrators, producing world-class operatic performances for diverse audiences throughout the Bay Area and around the globe.

“As a leader in the technology space and one who has had a passion for opera since she was young, Nilab Hessabi joins a fabulous and dedicated team of community leaders who want to see opera succeed now and in the future,” said **Opera San José General Director/CEO Shawna Lucey**. “Our staff, artists, and Board of Trustees are all looking forward to collaborating with Nilab as we continue Opera San José’s mission of elevating artists, creating a welcoming atmosphere for diverse audiences, and producing world-class operatic performances that reflect and celebrate our vibrant community.”

Hessabi currently serves as the head of data science, research and insights, human evaluation at the Apple headquarters in Cupertino in the Services Engineering division, overseeing functions including product analytics and insights, data and research science, and more for global teams in California, Washington, New York, Canada, the U.K., and Singapore. Prior to joining Apple in 2015, Hessabi served as senior technical product leader.

“I truly believe that opera is for everyone,” added Hessabi who officially became an Opera San José board member on January 24, 2024. “I have been passionate about the arts, and in particular, opera from an early age. It’s this passion that motivates me to bring opera to younger generations and broader, more diverse communities. Opera San José does a wonderful job in honoring the rich traditions and historical context of opera, while challenging conventions to create fresh meaningful experiences for its staff, artists, collaborators, current and future audiences, and I am eager to play a role in that continued work.”

Opera San José’s 40th anniversary season continues with a thrilling production of Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, performing at the California Theatre in downtown San Jose, now through March 3, 2024. Boasting some of opera’s most memorable music, including the signature aria “La donna è mobile,” this gripping work follows the jester Rigoletto, his innocent daughter Gilda, and the

corrupt Duke of Mantua whose callous treatment of women launches a storm of vengeance, murder, and tragic self-sacrifice. The production is led by visionary director Dan Wallace Miller, acclaimed for his work with Seattle Opera and other national companies, while Jorge Parodi guest conducts for the South Bay opera company – both making their OSJ debuts. For more information or to purchase tickets (\$55–\$195), the public can visit [operasj.org](http://operasj.org) or call 408-437-4450 (open Monday through Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm).

**Opera San José (OSJ)** is a flagship arts organization of Silicon Valley. Maintaining a resident company of artists, OSJ presents four mainstage productions annually in San José’s beautifully restored, magnificent California Theatre. It also regularly broadcasts fully produced productions from its state-of-the-art Heiman Digital Media Studio. OSJ specializes in role debuts, serving as an artistic incubator for established and emerging artists and administrators, producing world-class operatic performances for diverse audiences throughout the Bay Area and around the globe. More information is available at [operasj.org](http://operasj.org).

Opera San José performs at the **California Theatre**, one of the most magnificent, best-preserved examples of 1920s-era lavish motion picture palaces. Lovingly restored at the turn of the 21st century, its opulently ornamented interiors were completely refurbished, including the elaborately stenciled entry foyer ceiling and magnificent gallery. With only 20 rows of seats in the orchestra section, five rows in the grand tier, and six in the mezzanine, every seat has an excellent view of the stage. Totalling just over 1,100 seats, The California is comparable to England’s Glyndebourne and Venice’s historic Teatro la Fenice, joining the select ranks of the world’s most intimate opera houses.

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**PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos are available here:  
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