

OPERA SAN JOSÉ PARTICIPATES IN
SOUTH FIRST FRIDAY

WITH SNEAK PEEK OF UPCOMING PRODUCTION,
HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES,
MORE AT CALIFORNIA THEATRE

November 1, 2024

SAN JOSE, CA (24 October 2024) — **Opera San José** will present lively, free entertainment for art lovers participating in the Downtown San Jose SoFA District's evening art walk, **South First Friday**, on November 1. Joining this celebration of the city's arts and culture, Opera San José will open the doors of the historic California Theatre for an evening filled with music, a sneak peek of the upcoming production of Puccini's *La Bohème*, family-friendly crafts and holiday activities, and even a visit with Santa, to kick off the upcoming festive time of the year. Events will take place from 5:30pm to 8:30pm at the **California Theatre**, 345 South First Street, San Jose. For more information, the public can visit operasj.org.

To celebrate Opera San José's production of *La Bohème* set in Paris at Christmastime following the aftermath of the Great War, Christmas has come early to the California Theatre for First Friday. Arts aficionados will experience an array of events and activities celebrating Opera San José and to commemorate the upcoming winter holiday, Santa is set to visit the downtown San Jose theatre to listen to wish lists and take pictures. The holiday fun will also include greetings from a sugar plum fairy, a button-making activity hosted by Local Color, an origami station to create origami roses, complimentary free popcorn, hot cocoa, and hot cider, and the opportunity to hang an ornament and help create a festive community masterpiece by decorating the Opera San José holiday tree.

Beloved organist Jerry Nagano will perform favorite tunes on the California Theatre's mighty Wurlitzer organ starting at 5:30pm. At 6:00pm, Opera San José artists Julia Maria Johnson, Ilhee Lee Fallon Nunes, Nathan Savant, and Melissa Sondhi will perform highlights from OSJ's upcoming production of beloved opera *La Bohème* with pianist Veronika Agranov-Dafoe. The night will conclude at 7:45pm with Nagano returning to the organ for additional music.

"As our nights get chillier, our *La Bohème*-themed *South First Friday* event helps kick off this upcoming holiday season with festive moments for all ages," said Opera San José General Director/CEO **Shawna Lucey**. "We hope that our community comes to the California Theatre to

get cozy in San Jose’s jewel box theatre, experience unforgettable music by Puccini, and create special merrymaking moments.”

Snow will fall in San José when one of opera’s greatest love stories, Puccini’s *La Bohème*, continues Opera San José’s 41st season. Opera San José Artist-in-Residence tenor **WooYoung Yoon** stars as the poet Rodolfo, with sopranos **Kearstin Piper Brown** and **Mikayla Sager** alternating as Mimì, in this tantalizing tale of young artists living on the edge. Set in bustling Parisian cafés, raucous parties, and chilly garrets, *La Bohème* follows the pair of doomed lovers and their coterie of artist friends chasing happiness against impossible odds. Audiences will experience this production in the beautifully gilded historic California Theatre, one of the world’s most elegant and intimate opera houses. Opera San José Resident Stage Director **Michelle Ainna Cuizon** will make her mainstage directorial debut with Opera San José Music Director **Joseph Marcheso** set to conduct this masterpiece, performed in Italian with English and Spanish supertitles. *La Bohème* will be presented November 16 – December 1, 2024. For more information or to purchase tickets (\$58–\$215), the public can visit 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.

The **California Theatre** is 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. With just over 1,100 seats, The California is comparable to England’s Glyndebourne and Venice’s historic Teatro la Fenice and is in the select ranks of the world’s most intimate opera houses.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **Opera San José** will present lively, free entertainment for art lovers participating in the Downtown San Jose SoFA District’s evening art walk, **South First Friday**, on November 1. Joining this celebration of the city’s arts and culture, Opera San José will open the doors of the historic California Theatre for an evening filled with music, a sneak peek of the upcoming production of Puccini’s *La Bohème*, family-

friendly crafts and holiday activities, and even a visit with Santa, to kick off the upcoming festive time of the year.

WHEN: 5:30pm – 8:30pm, Friday, November 1

WHERE: **California Theatre**, 345 South First St., San José, CA

TICKETS: FREE

INFO: For more information, the public can visit operasj.org

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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
https://cbpr.co/press/osj_laboheme/