

OPERA SAN JOSÉ PARTICIPATES IN
**SOUTH FIRST FRIDAY
AND SONIC LOVEWAY**
WITH SNEAK PEEK OF UPCOMING PRODUCTION,
ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES AND MORE

February 7, 2025

February 14, 2025

SAN JOSE, CA (3 February 2025) — **Opera San José** is bringing free music, mystery, and interactive experiences to the community with *South First Friday* (February 7) and *Sonic Loveway* on (February 14). These free events offer the public advance glimpses into Béla Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, which premieres on Saturday, February 15, at the California Theatre in downtown San José. For more information the public can visit operasi.org.

"Our *Bluebeard's Castle*-themed *South First Friday* event invites the community to embrace an evening of mystery, music, and interactive fun at San Jose's jewel box, the California Theatre, where guests can enjoy enchanting performances, engage in hands-on activities, and immerse themselves in a night of discovery and celebration," said **Opera San José General Director/CEO Shawna Lucey**. "*Sonic Loveway* will highlight the incredible artistry of San José, showcasing the city's rich musical talent and vibrant creative community. Opera San José is proud to collaborate with local arts organizations, partnering with the Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) and the City of San José to celebrate and support the arts."

South First Friday, 5:30pm, February 7, California Theatre, 345 South First St., San José
Renowned organist Jerry Nagano will set the mood with suspenseful and romantic melodies on the theatre's historic Wurlitzer organ. Inside the theatre, audiences will be transported by the hauntingly beautiful voices of soprano Madison Hatten and baritone Jeremiah Sanders, accompanied by pianist Veronika Agranov-Dafoe, as they perform selections from OSJ's upcoming performance of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*—a tale of passion, mystery, and the unknown. Following this spellbinding performance, Nagano returns for a second set, filling the ornate lobby with enchanting melodies, where guests can unleash their creativity by designing temporary tattoos inspired by *Bluebeard's Castle*, in collaboration with Local Color. Those with a love for adventure can take part in a scavenger hunt, uncovering hidden surprises throughout the historic theatre. To add an element of mysticism, tarot card reader Yuliya will be available to offer glimpses into the unknown throughout the evening and participants can savor complimentary popcorn and hot beverages for this *South First Friday* event.

Opera San José presents an all-new production of Béla Bartók's chilling one-act opera *Bluebeard's Castle* directed by OSJ General Director/CEO **Shawna Lucey February 15 – March 2, 2025**, at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street, San José. This psychological thriller follows Judith who uncovers terrifying corners of her new husband's dark past while unlocking rooms in his eerie home. *Bluebeard's Castle* will feature Emeritus OSJ Artist-in-

Residence soprano **Maria Natale** whose recent acclaimed portrayals at OSJ include the title role in *Tosca* and The Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*, as the unwitting bride who comes to live in the haunted realm of a mysterious duke. Acclaimed baritone **Zachary Nelson** will make his OSJ debut as Duke Bluebeard and OSJ Music Director **Joseph Marcheso** is set to conduct the powerful work. *Bluebeard's Castle* by **Béla Bartók** with a libretto by **Béla Balázs**, will be performed in English, with English and Spanish supertitles. For more information or to purchase tickets (\$58 – \$215), the public can visit operasj.org or call **408-437-4450** (open Monday through Friday, 11:00am - 5:30pm).

Sonic Loveway, 5:00pm, February 14, San José City Hall Plaza, 200 E Santa Clara St, San Jose, CA 95113

Continuing the fun, **Opera San José**, in partnership with the San José Office of Cultural Affairs, members of the Symphony San Jose Chorale, Camp Rock, and the Silicon Valley Youth Harp Ensemble, will present *Sonic Loveway*, a magical Valentine's Day event celebrating love, art, and community. *Sonic Runway* is an immersive installation featuring a corridor of concentric arches illuminated by 554 addressable LEDs. Live audio input is transformed into intricate light patterns that race down the corridor at the speed of sound, creating a mesmerizing fusion of music and motion. To light up the runway, event-goers will hear captivating performances by Opera San José singers, including resident artist Melissa Sondhi (soprano), Nicolas Vasquez-Gerst (tenor), Mariya Kaganskaya (mezzo-soprano), and Michael Jesse Kuo (baritone). The evening will also feature members of the Symphony San Jose Chorale, Camp Rock, and the Silicon Valley Youth Harp Ensemble. The event will also feature a Makers Market with handcrafted goods and unique gifts from local artisans—perfect for Valentine's Day. Food lovers can savor a diverse selection of flavors from some of the area's best food vendors, offering a delightful culinary experience. This event is made possible through the collaboration of the San José Office of Cultural Affairs, Opera San José, members of the Symphony San Jose Chorale, Camp Rock, and the Silicon Valley Youth Harp Ensemble.

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** is bringing free music, mystery, and interactive experiences to the community with *South First Friday* (February 7) and *Sonic Loveway* on

(February 14). These free events offer the public advance glimpses into Béla Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, which premieres on Saturday, February 15, at the California Theatre in downtown San José.

WHEN: *South First Friday:* Friday, February 7, 2025, 5:30pm to 8:00pm
Sonic Loveway: February 14, 2025, 5:00pm – 8:00pm

WHERE: *South First Friday:* California Theatre, 345 South First St., San José, CA
Sonic Loveway: San José City Hall Plaza, 200 E Santa Clara St, San Jose, CA 95113

TICKETS: FREE

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

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