



Media Contact:

Rolando Reyes Mir

212.796.8628 | RReyesMir@operaamerica.org

**OPERA AMERICA HELPS
OPERA COMPANIES AND ARTISTS
REMAIN UNITED AND INFORMED**

**Announces Dues Waiver for FY2021
Thanks to the Generous Support of the
Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation**

May 19, 2020 (New York) — Thanks to the generosity and consideration of the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, OPERA America, the national advocate and service organization for opera, is pleased to announce a dues waiver for fiscal year 2021 for all current organizational members and individual artists. At a time when the entire field is under tremendous financial pressure, this waiver will enable members to remain united and informed through the coming year.

The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the opera field has been tremendous, with the cancellation of over 1,000 performances of more than 250 productions, and the loss of more than \$100 million in box office revenue through the end of August. Numerous world-premiere productions have been canceled or postponed, along with over 2,000 education and community programs. Over 10,000 artists have lost engagements.

“Every member is being forced to examine all expenditures to create tenable scenarios that sustain them until performances resume across the country,” explained OPERA America President/CEO Marc A. Scorca. “The support of the Getty Foundation enables us to provide uninterrupted service regardless of members’ ability to pay their dues.”

All OPERA America organizational members and individual artist members who are current as of June 30, 2020, will be eligible for an extended year of membership at no cost. Organizations that are not already OPERA America members will be welcome to join the organization in the course of the year, free of charge.

“We understood the profound need to help the opera field remain in close communication to benefit from shared experiences and the development of collaborative strategies,” stated Lisa Delan, the Foundation’s director. “We are especially pleased that our support will benefit individual artists as well as opera organizations, recognizing their complete interdependence.”

The Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation has provided generous support over many years to the field through OPERA America’s Building Opera Audiences Grants and, more recently, Innovation Grants, which have allowed opera companies to engage their artists, staffs, trustees, and community partners in bringing new ideas to the production and enjoyment of opera. In light of the current crisis, Foundation leaders have permitted the reallocation of their support for FY2021 to provide more widespread assistance to all organizational and artist members of OPERA America.

OPERA America will continue to make grants to companies and artists to empower new creative voices in the industry. Opera Grants for Female Composers, underwritten by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation; IDEA Opera Grants (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access), underwritten by the Charles and Cerise Jacobs Charitable Foundation; and IDEA Opera Residencies, underwritten by the Katherine S. and Axel G. Rosin Fund of The Scherman Foundation, will provide additional channels of support to female composers and creators of color through this difficult time. For additional information on available grants, visit operaamerica.org/Grants.

“We are deeply grateful to the Getty Foundation for their support of OPERA America’s member companies and artists,” added Timothy O’Leary, OPERA America’s board chair and general director of Washington National Opera. “This is a hugely challenging time for the people who create art, and we are so thankful for the opportunity to keep everyone connected and moving forward together.”

An initial announcement of the dues waiver was made on Friday, May 15, in a public, live-streamed event as part of OPERA America’s Opera Conference 2020. The free conference, which was moved online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, includes four weeks of presentations and panel discussions. It was designed to provide opera companies and artists with the perspectives necessary to inform the field’s path into the future. More than 2,500 people have registered, including 500 individual artists; the total is approximately four times the typical registration for an annual conference convened in person. For more information or to register for Opera Conference, visit conference.operaamerica.org.

“The impact of the Getty Foundation’s generosity cannot be overstated. Opera artists and companies will contribute to the re-establishment of community life in the months and years ahead. Universal stories from the inherited repertoire and new stories that resonate with the world around us will help us re-engage with one

another after this extended period of distancing. Collaboration across the field, facilitated by the Foundation's tremendous support, will accelerate our recovery," concluded Scorca.

OPERA America's membership services team will communicate with eligible members about activating their complimentary memberships. Individuals and organizations interested in joining are encouraged to email Membership@operaamerica.org to learn more.



About OPERA America

OPERA America (operaamerica.org) leads and serves the entire opera community, supporting the creation, presentation, and enjoyment of opera. The organization is committed to:

- Delivering professional development to artists, administrators, and trustees.
- Increasing appreciation of opera through educational and audience development resources.
- Offering technical support and informational services that foster the creation and presentation of new works.
- Fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of the opera industry.
- Undertaking national research and representing the field to policymakers and the media.
- Managing the National Opera Center, a custom-built facility that provides a centralized space for collaboration, rehearsal, and performance.

Founded in 1970, OPERA America fulfills its mission through public programs, an annual conference, regional workshops, consultations, granting programs, publications, and online resources. It is the only organization serving all constituents of opera: artists, administrators, trustees, educators, and audience members. Membership includes 150 professional opera companies; 350 associate, business, and education members; and 1,700 individuals. OPERA America extends its reach to 80,000 annual visitors to its National Opera Center and over 40,000 subscribers and followers on e-communications and social media. Representing over 90 percent of eligible professional companies, OPERA America is empowered to lead field-wide change.