

For Immediate Release

THE
SANTA FE
OPERA



The Santa Fe Opera Reports Strong Financials, Critical Acclaim and Continued Community Engagement for the 2024 Season

18 October 2024

Contact: **Emily Doyle Moore** | media@santafeopera.org | 505-986-5908

Santa Fe, NM — **The Santa Fe Opera** proudly announces the successful completion of its 67th Festival Season, which concluded on August 24, along with the achievement of a balanced budget at the close of its fiscal year on September 30. The **2024 Festival Season** marked a banner year for the organization, distinguished by artistic achievement, strong ticket sales and ongoing commitments to fiscal responsibility, community engagement and environmental sustainability. The season further strengthened the opera's reputation for excellence as it continues to draw new and returning audiences from around the globe. As a significant cultural and economic driver in Northern New Mexico, the opera employed 599 artists, technicians and staff, contributing an estimated \$250 million to the local economy.

Artistic Excellence and Critical Acclaim

The 2024 Season garnered praise from critics and audiences alike, with *The Santa Fe New Mexican* calling it "five for five." Notably, Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* returned to the SFO stage for the first time in 32 years in a new, international co-production hailed as a triumph with "everything one might desire," according to *The Wall Street Journal*. Other standout productions included the company's 19th world premiere, *The Righteous*, by **Gregory Spears** and **Tracy K. Smith**, which earned high praise from *The New York Times* ("produced lovingly in Santa Fe") for its original story ("a rarity in opera"), nuanced characters ("depicted with detail and sensitivity"), and exploration of themes including race, sexuality and power dynamics. General Director **Robert K. Meya** stated, "The critical and audience response to this season has been extraordinary. Each production celebrated opera's ability to move and inspire, and I am immensely proud of our artists and staff for their dedication to excellence."

Underscoring the company's commitment to artistic innovation and environmental stewardship, the company was proud to be recognized at the 2024 **International Opera Awards** in the world premiere and sustainability categories. More than 16,000 nominations were submitted for this year's awards, which took place in Munich on October 2. A distinguished international jury of opera critics, administrators and performers carefully selected the shortlisted nominees.

Steady Financial Success

The Santa Fe Opera achieved strong financial performance in FY2024, reporting ticket sales of \$9.2 million positioning it as the fourth-highest grossing season in the company's history and surpassing the previous year's figure of \$8.9 million. Fundraising efforts garnered over \$10 million, and the company's endowment has reached an all-time high of \$134 million. "We are thrilled to report a balanced budget and another season of financial health, thanks to the unwavering support of our patrons and donors," said Meya. "The opera's fiscal strength allows us to continue presenting bold and innovative programming while remaining a vital cultural force here in New Mexico."

Sustainability Initiatives

The Santa Fe Opera continues to make significant strides in its commitment to environmental sustainability. One of the most visible updates is the large ground-mounted solar array now perched on the hillside, noticeable as one approaches the opera from town. This installation marks the second phase of the company's solar initiative, which is nearing completion. Comprising 300 solar panels, the array will generate 275,000 kWh of clean energy annually, providing power to all the opera's administrative offices and covering half of the daytime electricity consumption of the Ranch and **Crosby Theatre**.

The first phase of this initiative was completed in April 2023, with 211 solar panels installed on the roofs of the Dapples Cantina and Stieren Orchestra Hall. Together, these systems produce over 120,000 kWh of renewable energy each year, further offsetting the company's carbon footprint. Said Meya, "With these combined efforts, the opera is well on its way to becoming one of the most sustainable opera companies in the world, reducing its environmental impact while continuing to deliver world-class performances."

Community Engagement and Free Opera Offerings

The Santa Fe Opera continues to prioritize access to the arts for all New Mexicans. The 2024 Season featured the return of free "**Opera in the Park**" screenings, with a presentation of *The Elixir of Love* held at Santa Fe's **Railyard Park** on September 15. In addition, for the fourth season running, the company collaborated with **95.5 KHFM Classical Public Radio** on live-recorded radio broadcasts of Opening Nights, reaching listeners statewide and beyond. These initiatives are part of the opera's mission to bring the arts to communities throughout New Mexico and to expand access to world-class opera.

The company also produced a range of programs that connect with New Mexico youth, from pre-K to high school and college. In the 2023-24 school year, 10 **Active Learning Through Opera (ALTO)** teaching artists led over 100 five-session residencies, engaging 1,500+ students. Other free or low-cost SFO programs that engaged children, families and the public included **Backstage Tours, Family Nights, Opera Makes Sense, NMArt Professional Development Workshops, Opera Storytellers, Prelude Talks, the Pueblo Opera Program, Youth Nights** and the **Young Voices of the Santa Fe Opera** which served an estimated 55,000 New Mexicans.

Looking to the Future

With an eye toward the future, the Santa Fe Opera is positioned for continued success. "We are energized by the momentum of the 2024 Season and look forward to what lies ahead," said Meya. "Our founding ideals of artistic innovation, community engagement, fiscal stewardship and environmental sustainability will ensure the continued growth of the Santa Fe Opera for years to come." The opera's **2025 Season** features debuts by some of opera's most exciting talents, and for the first time in company

history, performances of Richard Wagner's *Die Walküre*. Tickets starting at \$37 and subscriptions starting at \$105 are on sale now at santafeopera.org.

About The Santa Fe Opera

Recognized in 2022 as "Festival of the Year" at the International Opera Awards, the Santa Fe Opera annually draws 85,000 people from New Mexico and around the globe. Nestled atop a mountain vista in northern New Mexico, the company's iconic **Crosby Theatre** is open on three sides, allowing visitors to enjoy performances complemented by the elements. Since 1957 the company has presented over 2,000 performances of 180 operas by 92 composers spanning five centuries of opera, creating a legacy of 45 American premieres and 19 world premieres.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility at the Santa Fe Opera

Opera has the power to speak truth, broaden perspectives and invite empathy. The Santa Fe Opera is committed to the continuous work of becoming an antiracist and anti-oppressive organization and incorporating the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility. Our goal is to create a joyful and engaging environment in which a diverse community of artists, staff, volunteers and audiences alike belong.

The mission of the Santa Fe Opera is to advance the operatic art form by presenting ensemble performances of the highest quality in a unique setting with a varied repertory of new, rarely performed, and standard works; to ensure the excellence of opera's future through apprentice programs for singers, technicians and arts administrators; and to foster an understanding and appreciation of opera among a diverse public.

Discover More: santafeopera.org

Connect: [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Podcasts](#) | [TikTok](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#)

###