

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE
SANTA FE
OPERA**



The Santa Fe Opera Welcomes **84 Technical Apprentices for the 2026 Season**

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Santa Fe, NM — The Santa Fe Opera is delighted to announce the **84 members** of its **2026 Apprentice Program for Theater Technicians**. Selected from a pool of more than 700 national and international applicants, the class of 2026 includes **nine apprentices from New Mexico** and **two international apprentices**, contributing fresh creativity and technical expertise to the Santa Fe Opera and the broader performing arts industry. Each season, the technical apprentices perform essential backstage functions within one of eight distinct crews: **Audio/Visual, Costumes, Electrics, Production/Music Services, Properties, Scenic Art, Stage Operations** and **Wigs and Makeup**. The crews carry out daily changeovers to maintain the season's repertory schedule and fill positions crucial to the live-running of productions.

Santa Fe Opera Production and Recruiting Coordinator **Tracy Armagost** facilitates the program, including recruitment, hiring and programming numerous seminars, director/designer presentations and an annual portfolio fair. This year, Tracy traveled approximately **15,000 miles**, including **26 plane trips** and **1,000 miles driven**, to meet applicants at the **American College Theater Festivals (ACTF)** in four regions, colleges around New Mexico, and other job fairs and informational sessions tailored to reach tomorrow's opera artisans and technicians. The SFO was also represented at recruitment engagements, including the **Southeast Theatre Conference (SETC)** and the **United States Institute of Theater Technology (USITT)** conference in Long Beach, California, by its production department heads.

Throughout the summer, each technical apprentice has the opportunity to work with the company's world-class production staff, comprising designers, technicians, and skilled craftspeople from around the globe. In addition to their involvement in mainstage opera presentations, the technical and singing apprentices will also produce two evenings of apprentice-led programming during which they showcase their artistry to the public. The popular **Apprentice Scenes**, on **August 16 at 8:00 pm**, provide a wide range of performance and training opportunities with staged scenes from the operatic repertoire. The **Apprentice Concert** on **August 23 at 8:00 pm** features the apprentice singers in a concert alongside the **Santa Fe Opera Orchestra** conducted by **James Gaffigan**.

2026 Technical Apprentices

** Denotes second-year Apprentice*

AUDIO/VISUAL

Zachary Dukeminier, New Mexico*
Mia Elias, Texas
Jacob Gers, North Carolina
Lily Weigand, New Hampshire

COSTUMES

Erin Allen, Virginia
Aiden Berchtold, California
Shoshi Brustin, Colorado
Justin Buontempo, New York*
Donna Cantu, California*
Shay Conley, Illinois
Ella Doyle, California*
Amanda Geyer, Virginia
Räyya Gracy, Georgia
Ollie Gretok, North Carolina
Edward Webb Hodges, South Carolina
Jordan Lynn Howe, New Mexico
Lauren Kensley, Colorado*
Bethany Lawrence, Minnesota
Linda Litchy-Cervantes, Nevada
Auden Mucher, New York
Kalyn Paradis, Pennsylvania
Alexandra Riascos, New Jersey
Angelese Sanchez, New Mexico*
Madeline Schatzke, Texas
Kendall Swartz, Florida*
Moiria Swinford, New York
Jackson Underwood, Kansas
Summer Wasung, Michigan

ELECTRICS

Jenna Agredano, California
Li Downey, New York
Ella Fletcher, New York
Campbell Hicks, Colorado
Yi-Chen Lu, Taiwan
Kinsey Moore, Arizona
Matty D. Peterson, Texas
Gil Rogerson, North Carolina
Jay Sexton, New Jersey
Lumi Shalaev, Illinois

PRODUCTION/ MUSIC SERVICES CREW

Cruz Afonso, Florida
Mariah Braun, New Mexico
Elli Caunitis, Delaware

P/MS Continued

Jackson Tressel, Minnesota
Alice Wilson, Texas

PROPERTIES

Yassiar Brown, South Carolina*
Ally Doederlein, Michigan
Marisa Figueras, Florida
Michelle Guerrero, Texas
Ngan Ho-Lemoine, Vietnam
Olivia Houseman, Minnesota
Jordan Kerr, Ohio
Ren Kosiorowski, Michigan
Theo Kuehn, Colorado*
Sydney Liotta, New Mexico
Katie Mayers, New Mexico
Tony Nordyke, Texas
Lexie Scott, South Dakota
Callie Server, Iowa

SCENIC ART

Michaela Meyer, Florida
Ellie Vice, Colorado*
Mac Weaver, Massachusetts

STAGE CREW

Sebastian Alarcon, Texas
Logan Alvarez, Georgia
Christopher Blazer, Florida
Roe Burmester, Ohio
Leah Cobleigh, California
Sophie Coudert, Virginia
Lauren Custer, New Mexico*
Delaney Dwyer, New Mexico
Sam Feng, Colorado
Leta Jordá-Talevich, Michigan
AR Martin, Illinois
Linden Martin, Tennessee
Kent Mascheck, Texas
Jisselle Muñoz, Illinois
Rafael Payne, Texas
Anthony Sloterdijk, Texas
Ava Stipe, Texas*
Beka Underhill, Tennessee
Matthew Welch, Florida
Owen Wyatt, Texas

WIGS & MAKEUP

Faith Gilbert, North Carolina
Araceli Sias, New Mexico*
Jade Soto, North Carolina
Marcelina Villarreal, Texas

About The Santa Fe Opera's Apprentice Program for Theater Technicians

Established in 1965, the Apprentice Program for Theater Technicians has provided intermediate and advanced instruction and practical experience to young technicians in elements of stage operations. Among the first of its kind in America, more than 4,100 aspiring technicians have participated in the internationally recognized program. Former Technical Apprentices have progressed to careers as professional technicians and designers for stage and film work; others work in production at opera, theater and ballet companies worldwide.

The 2026 Season

In 2026, the Santa Fe Opera presents a lineup of classic, rarely performed and new works. The 69th Festival Season features **38 performances** of two new productions, two celebrated revivals and an American premiere. An homage to the company's first-ever performance in 1957, Opening Weekend takes flight on **July 3** with **Lee Blakeley's** acclaimed production of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, revived by **Melanie Bacaling**. Next, on **July 4**, is a new international co-production with **Garsington Opera** of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* directed by **Christopher Luscombe**. Centering the season from **July 18** is a revival of **Alessandro Talevi's** production of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, originally presented during the opera's 2021 Season. On **July 25**, Handel's *Rodelinda* is offered for the first time at the Santa Fe Opera, led by Santa Fe Opera Music Director and early music specialist **Harry Bicket** with direction by **R.B. Schlather**. Finally, on **August 1**, the Santa Fe Opera presents the American premiere of *Lili Elbe*, an opera in two acts by Grammy-winning composer **Tobias Picker** and librettist **Aryeh Lev Stollman**, featuring former Apprentice singer **Lucia Lucas** in the title role.

Says General Director **Robert K. Meya**, "As we celebrate the Santa Fe Opera's 69th Season, we honor a legacy built on bold creativity, artistic excellence and a spirit of discovery that has defined our company. 2026 offers audiences a confection of beloved classics, rarely heard masterpieces and thrilling new works, culminating in our 46th American premiere: **Tobias Picker** and **Aryeh Lev Stollman's** *Lili Elbe*. This significant premiere reaffirms our enduring commitment to presenting works that speak to our time and illuminate the future of our art form."

First-time visitors and long-time patrons can also look forward to offerings evocative of the singular Santa Fe Opera experience including tailgating, **Preview Dinners**, **Tours**, free **Prelude Talks** and much more. Individual tickets and subscriptions 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.

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