



Livermore Valley Opera NEWS RELEASE

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Photos attached

***Livermore Valley Opera Appoints New Executive Director; Artistic Director as
Company Enters Its 20th Season***

LIVERMORE, CALIF. -- Livermore Valley Opera announces the appointment of its new Executive Director **Elizabeth Wells**, and Artistic Director **Alexander Katsman** as the company prepares to celebrate its 20th season. This new creative team brings the expertise in opera, music and marketing to continue to build LVO's reputation as an emerging professional opera company.

"We are very pleased to welcome Elizabeth Wells and Alexander Katsman as the professional leaders of our opera," says Jim Schmidt, President of LVO's Board of Directors. "They will ensure our continued high artistic quality and expanded events to serve the people of the Livermore Valley and beyond. We have an ambitious set of events scheduled to celebrate our 20 years of bringing quality opera to the community, and these two professionals will ensure a successful anniversary season."

Executive Director Elizabeth Wells brings an extensive combination of skills and experience to LVO. In addition to more than fifteen year of producing and arts management experience, she has many years of business management experience and is an accomplished soprano. Wells has sung nearly 50 different lyric to dramatic coloratura roles with various regional opera companies in California and Oregon. She holds her Master's degree from Northwestern University and is currently completing an MBA in Marketing. She founded and ran her own opera company in Oregon for five years and produced more than 25 different operas during that time. She also produced operatic events in Chicago and Los Angeles for several years.

Wells comes to LVO following the departure of Sara Nealy, LVO's first Executive Director, who recently took on the same role for Festival Opera in Walnut Creek.

"I'm very pleased to be joining LVO," says Wells. "Sara Nealy and the board have laid some great groundwork that I look forward to developing further. LVO is a company long beloved in

the opera singing community and I look forward to sharing the reasons for that affection with as much of the Livermore Valley and surrounding Bay Area communities as possible.”

Wells’ commitment and love of opera is apparent in her dedication to performing in and producing operas. She is currently the part-time Executive Director of West Edge Opera in Berkeley and will be holding both executive positions concurrently. “People often ask how one chooses to pursue opera and I always answer that opera chooses you,” adds Wells. “Opera is my life’s calling and I am grateful for every opportunity I’m given to serve be it singing, producing, budgeting, contracting or getting to know my audience.”

Artistic Director Alexander Katsman is no stranger to LVO as he has a long relationship with the company dating back to 1992 when he was the rehearsal accompanist. He conducted his first LVO production “The Merry Widow” in 1998. For the past four years he has served as LVO’s Music Director and Conductor and directed its operas when LVO was first founded. An alumnus of the San Francisco Opera’s prestigious Merola Program, Mr. Katsman received his Master’s of Music from St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory and his Bachelor of Music cum laude from Mussorgsky College of Music in St. Petersburg, Russia. Since his arrival in the United States, Alexander has been sought after as a conductor and collaborative pianist. He has conducted for numerous Bay Area opera companies including Opera San Jose, West Bay Opera, Berkeley Opera, Bay Area Lyric Opera, Oakland Lyric Opera, San Francisco Lyric Opera, Diablo Light Opera, and Opera Academy of California. He also served on Conducting Faculty of BASOTI and Peninsula Teen Opera and currently on the coaching staff of San Francisco Conservatory and Holy Names University.

“I am looking forward to my new and expanded role with LVO and in working with Elizabeth,” says Katsman. “The company has really evolved over the years. Now that LVO has the Bankhead Theater as its performance venue, it has allowed us to move productions in a consistently professional direction which has grown our reputation as one of the best opera companies in the Bay Area.”

Raquel Holt, LVO founder and former Artistic Director is excited about the opera’s new creative team. “Alexander is a respected musician and has benefited LVO greatly. Under his baton, he has raised the standard of the LVO Orchestra. As Artistic Director, he will have a strong positive impact on the artistic growth of the company. Elizabeth brings great experience and skills in finance, marketing and development. As an opera singer, she has a good understanding of the theater and will certainly be an advocate for the arts in the community. Together, they will make this a noteworthy and an exciting 20th anniversary season.”

A Quick Peek at Livermore Valley Opera’s Upcoming 20th season:

Opera in the Vineyard	July 31
Gounod’s “Romeo et Juliette”	September 24, 25; October 1, 2
20 th Anniversary Season Celebration:	
Concert and Dinner, Ruby Hill Country Club	January 28
Puccini’s “Tosca”	March 10,11,17,18

About LVO

Livermore Valley Opera was founded in 1992, and presents fully-staged operas at Livermore’s Bankhead Theater in the spring and fall, as well as growing number of operatic events throughout the year. This new theater features excellent lines of sight and acoustics, helping the opera to attract talented singers and stage directors for their performances.

We combine the talents of professional musicians, stage directors, principal singers, and designers with the dedication and practical abilities of volunteers filling such critical roles as board members, chorus, stage crew, and set builders to reach our artistic goals.

Livermore Valley Opera is a community-based 501(c) 3 non-profit charitable arts organization. For more information, visit www.livermorevalleyopera.org.

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