

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pacific Repertory Opera Celebrates Silver Anniversary with New Name and Logo Opera San Luis Obispo unveiled

Pacific Repertory Opera celebrates their 25th Anniversary with a new name and logo.

The “Central Coast’s Own Opera Company” is renamed Opera San Luis Obispo and features a logo using the name and city location of the company. The new name change follows current naming conventions of many other opera companies nationally and world-wide.

“Our new name and logo effectively defines who we are and what we do. The design conveys our personality and character,” said Sharon Dobson, Acting Managing Director.

The new name and logo was unveiled at the sold out “Paradis d’ Amour” event on January 30, 2010 at the Christopher Cohan Performing Arts Center Pavilion. The board of directors unrolled a banner displaying the new name and logo to more than 180 guests.

The logo is in blue, orange and light orange and features text with a graphic starburst in the center of the O in Opera, along with a sweeping line connecting the E and the R in opera. The elements were intended to convey a modern, elegant design; forward-looking, yet timeless, invoking a sense of community and the natural environment. Barnett Cox and Associates of San Luis Obispo created the logo and the new website, www.operaslo.org.

Opera San Luis Obispo was originally founded as Pacific Repertory Opera (also known as PRO) by Dr. Jill Anderson and the late Jean Cook in 1985. They presented their first performance in the outdoor back patio at Linnaea’s Café in downtown San Luis Obispo.

They performed a few scenes from *The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart and *Der Rosenkavalier* by R. Strauss with a piano, costumes and a few props. Over the next two decades, PRO grew from simple scenes to fully staged professional productions. The company continues to use rising singers from SLO County and from across the country, with local performers for orchestra and chorus. They have offered everything from familiar favorites as *Carmen* and *Tosca* to unusual compositions such as *Fidelio* and *Red Cloud*, a rarely performed piece composed by S. Earl Blakeslee, late father-in-law to local Diane Blakeslee Brocato.

Today, this opera company is well known in regional and national opera communities.

Robert Ashens became Artistic Director for the company when founder Jill Anderson retired in June 2008.

“The name change represents the company’s moving forward into the next 25 years,” said Robert Ashens, Artistic Director. “The colors in the new logo are reminiscent of the colors in the San Luis Obispo city logo and recognize our presence and participation in this community, as well as the global opera community.”

Opera San Luis Obispo fills a critical role in the local community. Besides producing full scale quality operas, their popular Children’s Matinee program for 5th and 6th graders provides arts enrichment and classical opera education. In a time when school budgets can no longer afford this necessity, the company provides a valuable interactive learning experience for nearly 1,000 local students.

Other educational outreach includes opportunities for students elementary through college age. A summer Opera Day Camp for students ages 8 to 15 introduces youth to an entire opera production through hands-on activities. Vocal scholarships for high school and college students began in 2006, and a larger encompassing Young Artist Program started in July 2008 to encourage and mentor the musical aspirations of young singers. These programs are designed to nurture youthful talent at various levels within the community.

“In the future, I hope Opera San Luis Obispo can continue to do two fully-staged operas a year at a high artistic level, and continue its Education program with the Vocal Scholarship program and the Opera Camp. It should continue to be a force for high-quality vocal music in our community. I will certainly continue to support the company, no matter what it’s called!” said Jill Anderson, founder and former Executive Director of PRO.

Opera San Luis Obispo will present *La bohème* at the Christopher Cohan Performing Arts Center in San Luis Obispo on April 9 & 11. This poignant story of young artists struggling with love and loss in Paris was the inspiration for the hit Broadway musical, RENT, the movie storyline in “Moulin Rouge!” and the soundtrack of the movie “Moonstruck.”

The Opera office remains at 11549 Los Osos Valley Road, Suite 208, San Luis Obispo, CA and the phone number is (805) 541-5369.



Opera San Luis Obispo Directors with Logo Banner. Photo by Matthew Crockett.

L to R: Tara Jacobi, John Frey, Mike Radakovich (Treasurer), Jerry Vest, Sharon Dobson (Managing Director), Katrin Colamarino (Vice President), Jayne Cohen, Suzan Boatman, Duejean Garrett (President), Steve Cohen.

Not shown: Melissa Mertogul, Janet Peach (Secretary), Aaron Graves