



FOTO Newsletter

For EPO's Friends of the Opera

EL PASO OPERA



Fall 2025



**Headliner Levi Hernandez, baritone,
@ Encores & Overtures**



**Holiday #CurbsideOpera
@ Keystone Heritage Park**

Photos: El Paso Opera/Johnathan Cereceres

'Tis the Season: Celebrate a Fab Year!

Season 32 has been a bustling one! At Encores & Overtures (E&O), your headliner artist was beloved **baritone, Levi Hernandez**. Each year the board honors impactful supporters through the **Maestro Award**. This year's recipients were **Kirk & Judy Robison**, most notably for their support of EPO's Education Programs. In all, you raised over \$88,000 through ticket sales, silent auction, casino night play, and donations!

That success propelled us to invest in the future by opening up availability for **Teaching Artist Visits** to schools and youth programs throughout the city. Schools from Las Cruces to East El Paso signed up to engage students in learning about the **La Bohème**, opera related career options, and even try some singing of their own!

In October, donors rallied to raise funds for EPO during the city-wide fundraising event **El Paso Giving Day**. Thanks to our matching sponsor and your contributions, you raised \$24,810.15 to fund the work it takes to bring opera to El Paso!

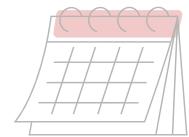
Education came in many forms this autumn when we welcomed **UTEP Intern Audrey Najera** to our team. Working closely with Office Assistant Sydney, Audrey is learning about the planning, preparation and production involved in your programming! From September to January, we appreciate the **financial support provided by UTEP's Center for Community Engagement (CCE)** for this opportunity.

2025's **Holiday #Curbside Opera** was sponsored by **University Medical Center (UMC)**! Listening to holiday favorites, opera classics or sing-along events at public spaces and assisted living centers added holiday cheer throughout the city!

During it all, Arianne, Cherry and production team members planned and prepared for **La Bohème**. You won't want to miss this one!

~The EPO Staff

Dates to remember:



Jan 1 to Feb 30
Support the Stars
campaign

Jan 30 to Feb 7
La Bohème
@ St. Rogers Depot

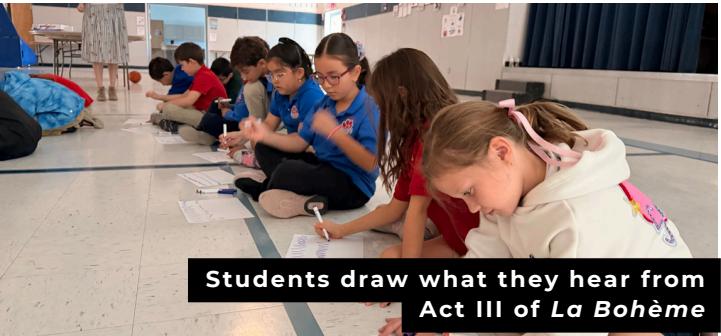
Jan to May
Education Presentations

Mar 28
Opera Uncorked
@ International Museum of Art

May 28-31
Bohemios
28 @ Mexican Consulate
29 @ Carreon Rec Center
30 @ The Beast
31 @ Keystone Heritage Park



Students at Western Hills Academy learn about posture & breathing



Students draw what they hear from Act III of *La Bohème*

Photos: Western Hills Academy

Noteworthy News: Growing our Education Impact

Many young faces lit up with joy and wonder as *Teaching Artist (TA) Holly Mesarch presented and performed at public and private schools throughout El Paso and Las Cruces this fall.*

Teachers throughout the region responded to our invitation to host presentations on ***opera-related career options, our upcoming production of La Bohème, or receive*** insights on student solo performances. The tradition of inviting students to ***Youth Night at the Opera*** continues at dress rehearsal, and transportation sponsorship makes the NEW ***Secrets of the Stage*** field trip possible!

During the presentations, older students enjoyed imagining their own concepts for a theoretical performance of ***La Bohème***; young students got their creative juices flowing as they drew what they heard in the opening of Act III; and theater students learned how posture and breathing impact their stage voices! Who knew opera could have such an impact? You did!

Our heartfelt thanks all our supporters and to our education sponsors, namely the J. Kirk & Judy Robison Foundation, Rea Charitable Trust, Hervey Foundation, and Texas Women for the Arts.



Photo : Holly Mesarch
Volunteer Spotlight

Christina Rodriguez (pictured left) is no stranger to non-profit organizations. She and Arianne met while working on CASA of El Paso's fundraising gala, part of which includes a silent auction. When it comes to creating silent auction bundles, Christina is a magician! Lightening the load of Executive Director, Arianne Marcee (pictured right), Christina went above and beyond in assisting by donating and creating beautiful baskets to showcase the generosity of our donors!



Season 32 Tickets

- Tickets are on sale for ***La Bohème*** (Jan 30, Feb 1, 3, 5, 7).
- Join us at ***Opera Uncorked*** (Mar 28) for a one-of-a-kind wine pairing opera concert!
- FREE tickets for ***Bohemios*** (May 28-31) are now available!



DONOR SPOTLIGHTS

Photos: El Paso Opera/Johnathan Cereceres & Irene Delgado



SEP: Arianna Bender

Arianna and her late husband settled in El Paso decades ago. She truly believes in the power of the arts. She donates unique and wonderful items for our Silent Auction, and is a Support the Stars and monthly donor. Arianna is a great example of being all-in with her opera support!



NOV: Lynn Provenzano

Lynn (left) donates annually to our Support the Stars campaign, and she supports our star efforts in getting the word out about EPO. As director of OLLI, Lynn put together a group interested in learning more about opera in El Paso. Because she previously worked as EPO staff, Lynn understands the need for opera in El Paso!



OCT: Mike & Claudia White

The Whites have supported EPO since the 2000s. Mike served on the board of directors for many years, and still serves an advisory role. He and Claudia generously donated our previous office space before moving to their historic space—which they rent to us with an in-kind donation discount!



DEC: University Medical Center of El Paso (UMC)

Not all donors and sponsors are individuals! This holiday season, the entire *Holiday #CurbsideOpera* was sponsored by UMC. The good folks at UMC understand the healing power of music, not only in a medical space, but throughout the community! Thank you, UMC!

WWWD: What Would Wilma Do?

Wilma Salzman is one of EPO's earliest supporters. Last season for **Support the Stars**, she donated \$1,000 for every year we've brought her joy. This was enough to cover not only our R&J lead singers, but almost the entire orchestra! Be like Wilma and Support the Stars today!

**See familiar
faces on...**



Photo: Marketing Hunters

SOCIAL MEDIA

**How To
Make a Difference
Today!**

Automate your donations:

make your life easier
and our community
better!



Comment on EPO's social media!

Facebook: @elpasoopera

Instagram: @elpasoopera

LinkedIn: @el-paso-opera

YouTube: @ElPasoOpera

**Invite a friend to attend
performance!**

Donate to **Support the Stars!**



Photos: El Paso Opera/Johnathan Cereceres

Learning “Opera”tunities: Internships with EPO

“What I thought was making a small impact was actually making a big difference.” That’s what **El Paso Opera Junior Artist (JA)** Jada Granados relayed as she and the other JAs met with Artistic Director Cherry Duke and EPO staff around a cozy cafe table to discuss what they had learned during their summer internship.

The **University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)** offers the **Liberal Arts Community Engagement (LACE) grant** to pay students to intern at local businesses. Leadership duo Arianne Marcee and Cherry Duke applied for three UTEP students to learn from valuable work experience in three areas: 1) *opera production*, 2) *community outreach via performing*, and 3) *office assistance*.

While many promising students applied, **UTEP music majors Rae Franco, Renée Guzman, and Jada Granados** stood out and became our Interns for Summer 2025.

JAs assisted stage manager Maya Lavin in preparing backstage for **Bon Appétit!** “There is a lot more that goes into productions that you don’t actually see ...providing essentials to a production,” mused one JA.

Lynn Provenzano at **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)** scheduled **Coffee Concerts tours** featuring live opera performances by JAs and collaborative pianist, Esequiel Meza. Following performances, Cherry and Arianne led lively discussions to learn what participants love about and want to see more of from EPO.

Casa Concerts had JAs visiting five opera fans in their homes or residences, along with friends they invited to join them. JA Renée said, “I really liked doing the Casa Concerts because I was, first-hand, seeing the impact. It made me feel like what we do actually makes a difference in the lives of people.”

These young people worked closely with **Office Assistant Sydney Gaglio** who said, “I personally found it exciting to watch them start at the beginning of summer as shy and unsure individuals and move into totally confident singers and public engagers.”

Those who attended **Encores & Overtures** were welcomed by these talented singers for *their final performance as JAs*. Their impact still resonates as we reflect on their time with El Paso Opera.

We now work with **Theater Arts major, Deaf Studies minor, Audrey Najera**, who impresses us with her enthusiasm to learn more about opera administration and production. Learn more about Audrey in our next FOTO Newsletter!

Arianne Marcee, Executive Director
 Cherry Duke, Artistic Director
 Holly Mesarch, Director of Impact & Engagement
 Sydney Monroe Gaglio, Office Assistant
 Audrey Najera, UTEP Intern

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