For Immediate Release

THE SANTA FE OPERA PRESENTS
WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCES OF
IMMIGRATION-THEMED OPERA
HOMETOWN TO THE WORLD
ON DECEMBER 17 & 19

15 October 2021
Contact: Emily Doyle Moore | media@santafeopera.org | 505-986-5908

Santa Fe, NM — The Santa Fe Opera is proud to present the world premiere of Laura Kaminsky and Kimberly Reed’s new opera Hometown to the World on December 17 at 7:00 pm MST and December 19 at 2:00 pm MST at the Lensic Performing Arts Center in downtown Santa Fe. This intimate opera is born of the complex intersection of race, religion, ethnicity and culture that was exposed following the 2008 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency raid of America’s largest kosher meatpacking plant in Postville, Iowa.

Under development since 2017, this new, one-act opera is commissioned by the Santa Fe Opera and its Opera for All Voices consortium partners. As the many issues surrounding immigration, citizenship, economic viability and cultural cohesion are at the center of national discourse, Hometown to the World is a critical piece of contemporary opera that seeks to create greater awareness, thoughtful dialogue and insightful responses. Tickets are $25 per person; seat assignments are first come, first served and will go on sale via The Lensic’s website beginning on Wednesday, October 20. More information can be found at Hometown to The World.

Preceding the world premiere of Hometown to the World, the Santa Fe Opera will present a number of community events focusing on immigration. The Opera for All Voices Dialogue Series reflects upon questions posed by the City of Santa Fe’s Culture, History, Art, Reconciliation and Truth (CHART) initiative. Panelists, including community faith leaders and Santa Fe youth, will discuss how our diverse community can build healthier relationships while acknowledging our differences and how we can all become good examples to our children, their children and generations to come. Dates and details are forthcoming. Interested parties are encouraged to check santafeopera.org for information as it becomes available.

About Hometown to the World

Composed by Laura Kaminsky with a libretto by Kimberly Reed, Hometown to the World is set in 2008, during the aftermath of the nation’s largest workplace Immigration and Customs Enforcement raid at that time of North America’s biggest kosher meat processing plant, in Iowa. The small agrarian town of Postville had been brought back to economic viability by the influx of a group of Hasidic Jews — from the Lubavitcher sect — who moved from Brooklyn to Iowa, where hogs outnumber people five to one. One Lubavitcher family took over the failing slaughterhouse and brought it back to life in the community of primarily Lutheran farmers of Scandinavian descent. Postville’s prosperity attracted workers from...
around the world. They emigrated mostly from Central America, especially Guatemala, but also hailed from Eastern Europe, East Africa, Israel and Palau. A vast number of workers were hired even though they were known to be undocumented. Many came in desperation, to escape poverty, violence and repressive regimes, seeking a new life in the U.S.

During its renaissance, Postville evolved into a model of multiculturalism, summarized perhaps most accurately by the sign on the edge of town, which reads: “Hometown to the World.” However, the 2008 ICE raid resulted in approximately one quarter of Postville’s residents – most of them Guatemalan – being arrested and deported, and another quarter fleeing, destroying the community. Families were destroyed, the meatpacking plant was forced to close and Postville’s ability to function was decimated. With this history of Postville as the backdrop, Hometown to the World tells the story of how the worlds of three characters from the community’s main ethnic, religious and linguistic groups collide in the wake of the brutal ICE raid. The result is a complex tale that ends with a message of hope and equity.

Directed by Kristine McIntyre, Hometown to the World runs for 75-minutes with no intermission and is sung in English, Spanish and Hebrew. The three-person cast features mezzo-sopranos Blythe Gaissert, Cassandra Zoe Velasco and baritone Michael Kelly. They will be joined by students of the Choral Arts Society of St. Michael’s High School led by music director Carmen Flórez-Mansi and an eight-player chamber orchestra. Scenic designer Luka Cantarella, costume designer Kara Harmon and lighting designer Kate Ashton round out the creative team.

The Santa Fe Opera is pleased to have collaborated with Hawai’i Opera Theatre on the streaming world premiere of Hometown to the World in May 2021. Additional development partners include Arizona State University’s Music Theatre + Opera Department (Feb 2020); San Francisco Opera (March 2019); and Opera Fusion: New Works, a partnership between Cincinnati Opera and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (Dec 2018).

About the Composer & Librettist
Laura Kaminsky
American Record Guide has praised Laura Kaminsky’s music as “full of fire as well as ice, contrasting dissonance and violence with tonal beauty and meditative reflection. It is strong stuff.” Named “one of the top 35 female composers in classical music,” by the Washington Post, Kaminsky “makes the most of textures, sometimes delicate and almost weightless, sometimes thick and convoluted, but always vivid.” With close to 50 productions to date, her chamber opera As One is the most produced contemporary opera in the United States and has also been mounted in Canada, Europe and Australia.

Kimberly Reed
Award-winning filmmaker Kimberly Reed has been honored as one of Filmmaker Magazine’s “25 New Faces of Independent Film,” Out Magazine’s “Out 100,” and received the Chicken & Egg Award. She has co-written libretti for four operas, including As One, the most frequently produced American opera of the 21st century. Her film projections for opera have been called “worthy of Fellini or Bergman” by San Francisco Classical Voice. She has also made achievement in broader artistic fields including as a frequent juror, lecturer and speaker; Kim is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. She is a summa cum laude graduate of UC Berkeley (B.A.) and San Francisco State University film school (M.A.).
The Creative Team
Carmen Flórez-Mansi..........Music Director
Kristine McIntyre..........Stage Director
Luke Cantarella..........Scenic Designer
Kara Harmon..........Costume Designer
Kate Ashton..........Lighting Designer
Kip Cranna..........Dramaturg San Francisco Opera
Cori Ellison..........Dramaturg Santa Fe Opera

The Cast
Blythe Gaissert..........Linda Larsen
Cassandra Zoe Velasco..........Linda Morales
Michael Kelly..........Abraham Fleischman

About Opera for All Voices
Opera for All Voices (OFAV) is committed to co-commissioning and co-producing new operatic works for audiences of all ages that bear the same artistic integrity and depth of storytelling as the festival season. There is additionally a commitment to social impact and the representation of diverse voices through the development of these new and important works. OFAV was guided by a consortium of opera companies led by the Santa Fe Opera including Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Minnesota Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, San Francisco Opera, Sarasota Opera and Seattle Opera — resulting in the commission of four new works, flexible in both scope and scale, which can be performed in a variety of venues. The teams behind the commissioned works were selected through an invitational process and adjudicated by a jury of twelve distinguished individuals in the field of opera.

Projects selected through the OFAV invitational are moving through the development process, each receiving workshops, the opportunity to premiere the opera at one of the partner companies, as well as the opportunity for subsequent performances at other partner companies. Commissions-to-date include Augusta Read Thomas and Leslie Dunton-Downer’s Sweet Potato Kicks the Sun (premiered October 2019), Chandler Carter and Diana Solomon-Glover’s This Little Light of Mine and David Hanlon and Stephanie Fleischmann’s The Pigeon Keeper. The Santa Fe Opera gratefully acknowledges the following development partners: San Francisco Girls Chorus for The Pigeon Keeper and Kentucky Opera, the American Spiritual Ensemble and Florida International University for This Little Light of Mine.

Commissioning and development support for Opera for All Voices is provided by the Melville Hankins Family Foundation, Principal Education Sponsor of the Santa Fe Opera; The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; and two OPERA America Innovation Grants generously funded by the Ann & Gordon Getty Foundation.

For Calendar Editors
• **What:** World premiere of new opera Hometown to the World commissioned and presented by the Santa Fe Opera as part of the Opera for All Voices Initiative
• **When:** Friday, December 17 at 7 pm MST; Sunday, December 19 at 2 pm MST
• **Where:** The Lensic Performing Arts Center at 211 W San Francisco St, Santa Fe, NM 87501
• **Tickets:** $25 per person; seat assignments are first come, first served. On sale via The Lensic’s website beginning on Wednesday, October 20. More information can be found at [Hometown to The World](#).
• **Good to Know:** *Hometown to the World* runs for 75 minutes with no intermission and is sung in English. Proof of vaccination and masking are required for all attendees. Read more about The Lensic’s health and safety requirements and protocols at [lensic.org](http://lensic.org).

**About The Santa Fe Opera**
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 177 operas by 90 composers spanning five centuries of opera, creating a legacy of 45 American premieres and 17 world premieres.

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*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*

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