

**Media Contact:**

Kelsey Buller
kelsey@mariandgold.com
619.361.1217

Media Contact:

Rebecca Davis
rebecca@rebeccadavispr.com
347.432.8832

San Diego Opera Announces the Inaugural Forbes Prize Vocal Competition**Two winners will receive cash awards and the promise of a mainstage role in a future San Diego Opera season**

SAN DIEGO (October 14, 2026) – San Diego Opera has announced the launch of the inaugural Forbes Prize, a new competition for emerging opera singers that will recognize two exceptional artists with cash prizes and the promise of a mainstage role in a future San Diego Opera season.

The Forbes Prize was established in memory of James Forbes in gratitude for his years of dedicated service to San Diego Opera. A longtime patron, staff member and member of the San Diego Opera Board of Directors, Forbes remained actively involved with the company until shortly before his passing in December 2020. The prize is intended to be awarded annually to early-career opera singers aged 18 and older.

Artists who are United States citizens are invited to submit online audition videos by October 31, 2026. Each applicant must submit two contrasting arias in separate languages. San Diego Opera will evaluate video submissions in November and expects to notify finalists who will be invited to San Diego by November 30, 2026.

The live final round will take place on the afternoon of Saturday, January 9, 2027. The competition will be adjudicated by a panel of three judges, whose names will be announced alongside the finalists. The venue and additional event details will be announced at a later date.

Two winners will be selected. The first-place winner will receive a cash prize of \$5,000, and the second-place winner will receive \$3,000. In a distinctive feature of the competition, both artists will also be offered a mainstage role in a future San Diego Opera season, a unique opportunity designed to help launch the next stage of their professional careers.

“One of the most important responsibilities of an opera company is to nurture the future of the art form,” said San Diego Opera’s Joann Clark General Director and CEO David Bennett. “James Forbes cared deeply

about San Diego Opera and its future and the Forbes Prize honors that legacy by identifying exceptional emerging talent and providing meaningful support as artists build their careers. The opportunity to perform a mainstage role makes this competition especially unique. It allows us to both recognize gifted singers, and invest directly in their future by giving them professional experience on the San Diego Opera stage.”

FORBES PRIZE APPLICATION DETAILS:

- Deadline for online video submissions: October 31, 2026
- Eligibility: Applicants must be at least 18 years old and United States citizens
- Audition materials: Two contrasting arias in separate languages
- Finalist notification: By November 30, 2026
- Live finals: January 9, 2027, in San Diego
- Awards: Cash prizes and the promise of a mainstage role in a future San Diego Opera season for each of two winners

ABOUT SAN DIEGO OPERA

Founded in 1965, San Diego Opera has delivered exceptional performances and inspiring educational programs to a wide audience in San Diego for 60 seasons, with a strong focus on community partnerships and the transformative and expressive power of the human voice. With a commitment to innovative storytelling, lifelong learning and engagement, and an awareness of great music’s power to bring audiences together, San Diego Opera provides a lasting cultural service to its community. To learn more, please visit www.sdopera.org or follow @sandiegoopera on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

###