



Annie Burridge

WELCOME TO AUSTIN OPERA'S 2022-2023 LONG CENTER SEASON!

I'm delighted to have you here for this joyous launch of our fantastic offerings in the Long Center this season. Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* is one of the most enduring and adored operas of all time for good reason. If these irresistible characters and virtuosic performances aren't compelling enough reasons to fit opera into our busy lives – then I don't know what it is!

Over the past six years my team and I have worked hard to make Austin Opera one of the best places to work in opera, and each season we have been able to bring more and more remarkable artists to our stage as a result. This season features a record number of Austin Opera debuts, including the three stars of this production. In 2018, I judged a singing competition in Alabama and nearly fell out of my chair when a very young Emmett O'Hanlon performed Figaro's signature aria from *Barber*. After

awarding him first prize, I called my colleagues to let them know it was time to bring this show back to Austin Opera audiences so that we could introduce you to this exceptionally talented artist. This, of course, meant we needed an exceptionally talented Rosina and Almaviva to join him, and we are bursting with pride to bring you internationally renowned Austin native Lauren Snouffer's Austin Opera debut, along with one of the most exciting young tenors of our time, Jack Swanson, who comes to us after debuting the role with Santa Fe Opera this past summer. Leading them at the podium in her Austin Operas debut is the immensely talented Stephanie Rhodes Russell.

Everything we do at Austin Opera is handcrafted for you. We select each principal singer from a pool of hundreds of thousands of talented artists across the country; we work with the local artists that comprise our chorus and orchestra to elevate our artistry each year; and we work with a team of directors and designers selected for each production to create story-telling that is compelling. We do this because we believe the act of coming together to experience, reflect on, and engage with our humanity – as we do when we attend an opera performance – is one of the most meaningful ways in which we can spend an evening or afternoon. Thank you so much for being a part of it!

Annie Burridge,
General Director & CEO