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**AUSTIN OPERA announces**

***Noche de Bienvenida/Welcome Night***  
during the company premiere of  
***Cruzar la Cara de la Luna***  
***February 1, 2024***

***in collaboration with the***  
***Consulate General of Mexico in Austin and Univision***

(Austin, TX—December 14, 2023) Austin Opera announces a collaboration with the **Consulate General of Mexico in Austin** and **Univision** to host *Noche de Bienvenida/Welcome Night* on February 1, 2024, the opening night of *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* (*Crossing the Face of the Moon*).

During *Noche de Bienvenida*, audiences will experience José ‘Pepe’ Martínez and Leonard Foglia’s 90-minute mariachi opera, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, and will have the opportunity to purchase food and refreshments from Latinx vendors at The Long Center for the Performing Arts. The evening will be hosted by familiar Univision television personalities and will include a performance from the University of Texas’s mariachi group, The Mariachi Paredes de Tejastitlán, on the Long Center’s H-E-B Terrace following the opera. To welcome as many members of the community as possible, 1,000 \$39 tickets have been made available for the community in every seating section of the Long Center’s Dell Hall. Patrons can take advantage of this special offer by visiting [austinopera.org](http://austinopera.org) and using promo code WELCOME during checkout when purchasing *Cruzar* tickets for the February 1 performance. Additional performances of *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* will take place at the Long Center on February 3 and 4, 2024.

Consul General of Mexico in Austin and Austin Opera Trustee Hon. Pablo Marentes states “Austin Opera has proven to be a tremendous partner and ally who shares our goal of community-building through art, music, and storytelling. We are excited to host *Noche de Bienvenida* for *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*. The opera’s timely theme of people migrating to Texas from Mexico for the well-being of their families is a deeply resonant story for Mexican and Mexican Americans but also a very universal story. To witness our cultural heritage as

Mexicans, Mexican Americans, Latinos, and Hispanics admirably represented with pride and dignity and to experience this personal story as a community will offer a deeply meaningful experience.”

Austin Opera’s production of *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* is a new co-production by Austin Opera and Minnesota Opera directed by University of Texas graduate David Ramadés Toro. The new production features scenic and costume design by Tony Award nominee Arnulfo Maldonado, lighting design by Carolina Ortiz Herrera, and sound design by C. Andrew Mayer. Wig and make-up design is by Melanie Steele. David Hanlon has created a new orchestration of Martínez’s groundbreaking score blending the unique sound of a Mariachi trio with a full opera orchestra.

*Cruzar* tells the story of a multigenerational Mexican American family with central themes of sacrifice, family, and heritage. Set in Texas and Michoacán Mexico, the story takes place in both the past and the present as Laurentino, a Mexican man who has moved to the United States to work, journeys back in time through memory to reflect on his life in his final days. With members of the Velásquez family by his side, Laurentino questions the true meaning of ‘family’ and ‘home’ after a life straddling two cultures.

The cast for *Cruzar* includes Claudia Chapa, Austin Opera’s Curator for Hispanic and Latinx Programming, making her role debut as Lupita. “As Austin Opera’s inaugural Curator for Hispanic and Latinx Programming and as a Mexican singer having grown up in the border town of Laredo, Texas, I’m elated that my home company is investing in operatic works by Hispanic composers to connect more deeply with our community. The story of *Cruzar* shows the diversity of Mexican and Tejano culture and is a very real representation of the modern truth of Latinidad,” says Chapa. Daniel Noyola and Cassandra Zoé Velasco will make their Austin Opera and role debuts as Laurentino and Renata. Making her Austin Opera and role debut in the role of Diana is Assistant Professor of Voice at the Butler School of Music at UT, Lily Guerrero. Veteran *Cruzar* cast members Efraín Solís, Efrain Corralejo, and Daniel Montenegro will make their Austin Opera debuts as Mark, Rafael, and Chucho, respectively. Sarah and Ernest Butler Music Director Timothy Myers will conduct the production featuring the Austin Opera Orchestra and the Mariachi musicians of Trío Chapultepec. The Trío comprises three much sought-after musicians from San Antonio—Vincent Pequeño, Israel Alcala, and William Carlton Galvez.

This production of *Cruzar* is the first opera at the Long Center supported by the new Butler Fund for Spanish Programming, created in 2022 with the donation of a \$3 million endowment gift from Austin philanthropists Sarah and Ernest Butler. Austin Opera General Director & CEO Annie Burrige says “We are extremely grateful to the Butlers who have enabled us to reach this important programmatic milestone in our company’s history with *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*. Their investment has enabled us to exponentially expand our storytelling with the Hispanic/Latinx community in Austin. What began as a free concert series at the Mexican Consulate has now grown to include a national PBS broadcast of *Bella Noche de Musica*, the launch of the first-ever opera residency program for Latinx Creatives,

and a new production and orchestration of *Cruzar* that will make this landmark work available to more opera companies and symphonies.”

Austin Opera and the Consulate General of Mexico in Austin are in their third season of *Concerts at the Consulate*, a free event series held at the Consulate’s expansive East Austin campus. The series evolved in April 2023 with *Bella Noche de Música*, a free large-scale concert celebrating Latinx artists and music that drew 1,500 community members to the Moody Amphitheater at Waterloo Park. A live recording of the concert is currently airing across the country on PBS, reaching a potential audience of 60 million to date. The Opera ATX Residency for Latinx Creatives, which launched this season, provides a unique workshopping space for Latinx composer/librettist teams to advance projects that will expand the scope of operatic storytelling.

*Noche de Bienvenida* for *Cruzar* is supported by a City of Austin 2023-2024 Elevate grant which aims to support culturally vibrant and diverse artistic content.

### **About Austin Opera**

Serving Central Texas since 1986, Austin Opera inspires audiences with its trademark blend of innovation and artistic excellence. With the leadership of General Director & CEO Annie Burridge and the Sarah and Ernest Butler Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor Timothy Myers, Austin Opera presents a curated season of grand opera productions at the Long Center, the crown jewel of Austin performing arts venues. Combining the finest American and international stars with the outstanding local talent of our Orchestra and Chorus, Austin Opera’s productions include accessible takes on classic operas as well as challenging new works that reinforce the continuing relevance of opera.

Opera ATX, powered by Austin Opera, brings groundbreaking new works, emerging artists, exciting composers, and dynamic directors to Austin. By tapping into the city’s live music DNA, Opera ATX reflects the spirit of the city and the pioneering image it is known for. The Company creates the conditions for operatic experiences completely new to Austin—and perhaps completely new to the art form—by exploring alternative venues and unique local partnerships. Driven by Austin Opera’s love of opera, love of audiences, and love of Austin, Opera ATX shows how Austin is shaping its opera company and inspiring innovative experiences.

*Live from Indy Terrace*, Austin Opera’s digital channel is the home of original content free to patrons and includes recitals, interviews, fan-favorite programs like *Conductor Cues* and *Opera Overtures*, and broadcasts of the company’s new series *Concerts at the Consulate*. *Concerts at the Consulate*, programmed in partnership with the Consulate General of Mexico in Austin, spotlight Latinx composers and performers and celebrate Hispanic culture.

Austin Opera is also a force in hundreds of classrooms across Central Texas, nurturing the next generation of opera audiences through its award-winning education programs. Austin Opera works directly with educators, community leaders, students, and parents to make opera relevant, educational, and entertaining for students of all ages.

In 2020, Austin Opera was voted “Opera Company of the Year”—and Timothy Myers was named “Conductor of the Year”—in the [BroadwayWorld Opera Awards](#).

To learn more about Austin Opera, visit [austinopera.org](http://austinopera.org) or follow along on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), or [Twitter](#) at @austinopera.

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