



MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM APPOINTS NANCY E. PETRISKO DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (17 May 2021) – The **Merola Opera Program** will appoint **Nancy E. Petrisko** to the company's newly created role of Director of Advancement on June 1, 2021. "I am thrilled to have Nancy join the Merola team," said Merola Executive Director **Jean Kellogg**. "She has so many of the qualifications we were looking for—extensive development experience in a wide-range of arts and education organizations, excellent rapport with donors, a history of mentoring staff members, deep respect in the arts community, and a great passion for opera and young artists. I am certain she will be a catalyst for new ideas for building support in order to sustain the quality and vitality of Merola and the future of opera."

As Director of Advancement, Petrisko will play a prominent role in ensuring the ongoing success of the renowned organization, which provides training and professional development for the finest young opera singers, pianist coaches, and stage directors from around the world, nurturing the opera stars of tomorrow and offering outreach through educational programs for students and the general public. Her responsibilities will include leading the way with fundraising efforts from all channels, executing new development programs, and expanding membership. She will be responsible for creating and implementing an annual fundraising plan, overseeing grant writing and proposals, communicating regularly with Board members, overseeing the planning and execution of the annual benefit gala, developing new approaches for increasing audiences and membership while nurturing current donors and board members to inspire increased loyalty and support, developing strategies for long-term financial sustainability, and managing and directing other fundraising and membership building events throughout the calendar year.

"I have been a huge fan of the Merola Opera Program since my earliest days with San Francisco Opera at the beginning of my career," says Petrisko. "I am honored to be a part of such a distinguished team and outstanding company. I welcome the chance to apply my skills for the long-term benefit of artists, audiences, and the future of opera."

Currently the Director of Development for the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, UC Davis, Petrisko is an accomplished arts administrator and educator with experience in a wide variety of fields including grant writing, fundraising, development, programming, consulting, and performing arts management at leading arts organizations, universities, and nonprofits. She has also taught courses at the university level related to arts management. Petrisko's 30+ year professional career began at San Francisco Opera, where she served as Operations Manager, and has included extensive work with new and established opera companies and organizations dedicated to the vocal arts including Washington National Opera, Vocal Arts Society, Opera

Lafayette, Washington Concert Opera, and Opera Parallèle. Many years were dedicated to presenting organizations such as San Francisco Performances, the San Francisco Symphony, Washington Performing Arts Society, the Kennedy Center, and BlackRock Center for the Arts (MD), where she worked with a wide variety of artists in music (classical, jazz, world, and popular), dance (modern and classical), and theater. Her greatest pride as an independent consultant was working with young organizations to build resources, engage in successful planning to effect financial turnaround, and establish fundraising efforts for success. Petrisko's accomplishments include a successful capital campaign to build an arts education center for an underserved community, bi-coastal fundraising to establish ambitious music recording efforts, interim leadership during periods of organizational stress and change, and strategic planning for staffing and governance success. For ten years, she taught masters-level courses in nonprofit management, finance, and fundraising at American University to students beginning careers in arts management and public service. Additional work in the field includes panel review for national, state, and regional arts funding and certification sources.

"We very much look forward to welcoming Nancy as the newest member of our staff," add Board Chairman **Patrick Wilken** and President **Barbara Bruser Clark**. "We are confident that her demonstrated passion for opera and the next generation of young artists, combined with her rich heritage in the Bay Area arts community, will be the perfect complement to our already estimable team."

The **Merola Opera Program** is widely regarded as the foremost opera training program for aspiring singers, pianist coaches, and stage directors. Merola nurtures the opera stars of tomorrow with master classes and private coaching with opera's most accomplished singers, conductors, and directors. Participants also receive training in operatic repertoire, languages, diction, acting, stage movement, and professional development. Offered free of charge for all participants, the Merola Opera Program is unique in the industry in many ways. It is the only young artist program to provide financial support to developing artists for five years following their participation, offering aid for essential career development expenses including coaching, language classes, and audition travel. In summer 2020, the company initiated the [Merola Artists Emergency Fund](#) to offer much-needed financial assistance to those artists who have lost wages and incurred unreimbursed expenses as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information on Merola Opera Program, the public may visit www.merola.org

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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/MerolaDirectorOfAdvancement>