



For Immediate Release

**OPERA PARALLÈLE GENERAL AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR NICOLE PAIEMENT
ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS
RUTH NOTT, MANAGING DIRECTOR & AILEEN TAT, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**



Aileen Tat, Ruth Nott and Nicole Paiement

Credit: Cory Weaver

operaparallele.org

San Francisco (Wednesday, August 11, 2021) — Opera Parallèle General Director and Artistic Director **Nicole Paiement** today announced the appointment of two highly experienced and nationally known non-profit arts administrators to the company’s leadership: **Ruth Nott** as Managing Director and **Aileen Tat** as Development Director. Both positions are effective immediately.

Adding to today’s exciting administrative news, the company wishes to belatedly announce the decision by Opera Parallèle’s Board of Directors in late 2020, to expand company founder, conductor and Artistic Director Nicole Paiement’s position to include General Director.

“I’m very proud to announce the appointments of Ruth and Aileen to the Opera Parallèle administration,” said Paiement. “Both women have impressed all of us with their outstanding leadership skills and their enthusiasm for the company’s mission and work. They join us at a pivotal time in the company’s trajectory and I’m confident their extraordinary work ethic and collaboration will contribute significantly to our new administrative structure and artistic success.”

In related news, the company is proud to confirm the appointments of three highly talented artists as new company associates: **Michael Mohammed**, who will serve in a newly created position as

Community Engagement Ambassador; musicians **Jessica Bejarano** and **Jaymes Kirksey** as assistant conductors and members of the company's Artistic Committee for the 21/22 season; and company veteran **Daniel Harvey**, has been promoted to Artistic and Community Manager, and Assistant to the General and Artistic Director.

RUTH NOTT

Ruth Nott is Opera Parallèle's Managing Director after previously serving as Interim Chief Operations Officer. Nott has built a multi-decade career of success by mastering the art of innovation and excellence, focusing on opportunities to increase awareness and access to the arts.

From 2008 through 2019, she served as Director of Education for the San Francisco Opera. She was recruited to create the opera's first department committed to community-building and arts education. Nott was at the helm of a team that innovated multiple programs serving more than 70,000 people annually. Among these initiatives is Arts Resources in Action (ARIA), which was recognized with a Yale Distinguished Music Education Partnership Award for its focus on collaboration, professional development, and arts integration. She held previous positions at the Metropolitan Opera Guild, New York City Opera, IMG Artists, Aspen Music Festival and School, and Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Ruth Nott inspires organizations to stretch beyond the boundaries of convention and tradition. Throughout 2019-2020, Ruth brought those strengths to consulting positions with Santa Fe Opera; Lyric Opera of Kansas City; Music at Kohl Mansion's Violins of Hope project; Kyoo, an online ordering system and partner of point-of-sale system Square; and started PrimeLife Arts Learning, an on-line Creative Aging art-making platform dedicated to improving the social and emotional well-being of older adults.

AILEEN TAT

Opera Parallèle's Development Director, Aileen Tat, recently held a senior development role for San Francisco Opera as Leadership Giving Officer. She managed a robust portfolio of leadership supporters and board members, maintaining generous engagement and support through major organizational transitions. She oversaw multiple projects and initiatives including growing the Opera's Orpheus young professional donor program; working with the board's Education Committee; and serving as a founding member of the Opera's Diversity, Equity and Community Committee.

Aileen Tat is one of the 16 national company representatives originally selected to participate in OPERA America's Community-Centric Fundraising for Opera working group, which has doubled in size and aims to establish more equitable and inclusive fundraising practices throughout the opera industry. She also serves on the board of Pacific Primary preschool, a national leader in early childhood anti-bias education. Her other professional credits include working in development and membership at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and in various roles supporting artists and non-profits in New York City, including the Brooklyn Rail and the Public Art Fund. Tat holds a BFA in Photography from the School of Visual Arts, and studied public art with Ruth Asawa.

Michael Mohammed, researches the representation of performers with historically excluded identities in opera and theatre. He is on faculty at San Francisco Conservatory of Music, San José

State University, College of Marin, and San Francisco Community Music Center. A stage director, choreographer, and performer, he has co-created work with Amplified Opera, a Toronto-based company that places equity-seeking artists at the center of public discourse. He is an Affiliate Member of the Black Opera Research Network. Having performed with Opera Parallèle on numerous occasions, Michael Mohammed joins the company as Community Engagement Ambassador.

Jessica Bejarano is the founder and music director of the San Francisco Philharmonic. She also serves as assistant conductor of Opera Parallèle, including the company's recent production of *Everest – A Graphic Novel Opera*; music director at Escuela Bilingue Internationale; and as a board member of the Association of California Symphony Orchestras. Bejarano is a regular guest conductor with the *Antonio Soler Orquesta* in Spain and has guest conducted in the Czech Republic, Venezuela, Spain, Bulgaria, Romania, Italy, and Russia. Bejarano was named KQED Arts' Bay Brilliant Top 10 Artists of 2018, was featured by PBS *NewsHour* as an emerging female conductor to watch, and showcased on NBC's *The Today Show* with Natalie Morales as the "Woman Breaking Barriers as a Trailblazing Symphony Conductor."

A native of the great state of Oklahoma, **Jaymes Kirksey** joins Opera Parallèle as an Assistant Conductor. Over the years, he has become a national presence as a violinist, pianist and conductor. The Music Director of Young Musicians Choral Orchestra, Solano Youth Chamber Orchestra and frequent guest soloist and conductor of Golden Gate Symphony, Kirksey brings with him versatility, precision, and an exciting stage presence. As a conductor and educator, he has created high quality musical interpretations ranging from Baroque to modern symphonic repertoire. Kirksey has performed in venues across Europe and the US and remains a steadfast performer in the Bay Area. He holds a Master's Degree in Violin Performance from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

For more information about Opera Parallèle and its recent launch of the nationally acclaimed *Everest – A Graphic Novel Opera*, visit operaparellele.org

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NB: For photographs, please visit

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1oOt0Ghse5_huGAmICXchT25KyxQG88hK?usp=sharing