Animals bring opera programs together

How do a donkey, a dog, a cat and a rooster bring Sacramento State opera students together with Sacramento Opera, the city’s professional company?

It happens when the animals are part of John Davies’ “The Bremen Town Musicians – A Children’s Opera,” based on the popular tale of the four animals who leave the farm to seek their fortune.

The opera will be presented at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 11, as part of the Cat & the Fiddle Music Festival at Fairytale Town on Land Park Drive. The festival also includes the Sacramento Philharmonic’s WolfGANG! woodwind ensemble’s presentation of Prokofiev’s “Peter and the Wolf.”

The parts of the Bremen musicians will be performed by Sac State alumni Brandon Anderson, Sara Haugland and Matt Hidalgo, and current junior Rachael Sprague, under the auspices of Sacramento Opera.

This is the first step in a new partnership between Sacramento Opera and Sac State’s Opera Theatre, orchestrated by the University’s opera instructor, Omari Tau, and Robert Tannenbaum, new general director of the Sacramento Region Performing Arts Alliance (SRPAA), also known as Two In Tune.

The alliance merges the operations of the Sacramento Philharmonic and Sacramento Opera, and Tannenbaum’s vision includes a comprehensive venture that could add even more programs from Sac State’s College of Arts and Letters.

“What we’re doing is not going to be here in 30 years if we don’t engage the younger generation,” Tannenbaum says. “My first priority is to make sure we have something here to pass along.”

He’s especially intrigued with the idea of getting general education students from the Critical Explorations in Arts & Letters class interested in the opera and symphony. One of the ways to do that is get them involved ahead of a concert or performance by having them attend rehearsals to get an idea of what goes into a production. “The thing that often interests students is how it’s put together,” Tannenbaum says.

Plans also call for offering a discount to students, giving them choice seats at a reduced price.
Joining with the Opera Theatre is just the first step in an ongoing partnership process.

This is Tau’s second year as director of the University’s Opera Theatre. A Sacramento native, Tau spent a lot of time in professional theater, including a nine-year tour in Disney’s *The Lion King*, in which he played the front half of a rhinoceros, then took over the role of Banzai, the hyena.

Like Tannenbaum, Tau is thrilled with the new relationship between the two companies. “We want to create something where, when students come to Sacramento State, they will have connections to performance opportunities,” Tau says.

He notes that “The Bremen Town Musicians” is a great way to start the collaboration. It’s small enough that it doesn’t have a huge overhead, yet it creates connections with the community, providing a great experience for children and families.

Tau not only supports the community concept, he lives it, most recently performing in the Music Circus’ production of *Show Boat*.

College of Arts and Letters Dean Edward Inch is also excited about the new collaboration. “There are many good opportunities for the University, our college, and our students and faculty to work creatively with this partnership,” he says. “It will strengthen Sacramento’s creative core and provide opportunities for our region to showcase the best of our performing arts education, and the professional performances that make this a special place to live and work.”


For media assistance, call Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

– Craig Koscho
[ckoscho@csus.edu](mailto:ckoscho@csus.edu)

Sacramento State is making a difference in California’s Capital Region and beyond. We offer a life-changing opportunity for our 28,000 students, preparing them to be leaders in their professions and communities. Our professors are known for their dedication to great teaching. And our location in the capital of the nation’s most populous state allows students to pursue unique internships and research.

### 154-S13-CK