



For Immediate Release

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Bless Me Ultima - the opera

Based on Rudolfo Anaya's epic novel

PART OF HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATIONS

Opera Cultura in association with the Mexican American Studies and Cultural Heritage Center-MLK library, San Jose State University will be presenting excerpts from Hector Armienta's opera, *Bless Me Ultima*, based on Rudolfo Anaya's epic novel of the same title. Four arias will be performed by an incredibly talented cast, including international star mezzo soprano Suzanna Guzman. After the performance there will be a discussion with the composer and cast about the work.

Location:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library , Room 225
San Jose State University,
150 E San Fernando St, San Jose, CA 95112
September 26th, 2015,

THE STORY

Antonio Marez is a young boy when Ultima comes to stay with his family in New Mexico. She is a curandera, one who cures with herbs and magic. Under her wise wing, Tony will probe the family ties that bind and rend him, and he will discover himself in the magical secrets of the pagan past-a mythic legacy as palpable as the Catholicism of Latin America. And at each life turn there is Ultima, who delivered Tony into the world...and will nurture the birth of his soul.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Opera Cultura will produce the world premiere in 2018 in San Jose Ca. Arizona Opera will conduct a reading in 2016. Opera Southwest and the National Hispanic Cultural Center will produce it in 2018 as well. In 2017, Opera Cultura will conduct a new reading.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER/LIBRETTIST

Hector Armienta focuses on creating work that explores the Mexican & Mexican-American cultural experience. Awards & commissions include those from Meet the Composer, the NEA, Opera Pacific, the Pacific Symphony, and others. Presenting organizations include Opera Pacific, Western Stage Theater, Teatro Latea, Forth Worth Opera and Tulsa Opera. Most recently, Armienta's Cuentos de Peregrinación premiered in San Jose Ca and Guadalajara's Teatro Degollado. Excerpts will be presented at the Opera American conference in May 2015 in Washington D.C.

SPONSORS

The reading is funded in part by the Knight Foundation, the Castellano Family Foundation, Silicon Valley Creates and Friends of Opera Cultura.

ABOUT OPERA CULTURA

Our mission is to explore the Latino - Hispanic cultural experience through music theater and opera, while providing opportunities for the community to participate as creators, learners, and performers. We accomplish this by presenting the work of composer Hector Armienta, showcasing other artists, and training young people in the performing arts. By doing so, we create a cultural bridge between communities.

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