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Allison Rabbitt appointed Seattle Opera Development Director

Whether it's a \$5 donation or a \$50,000 donation, **Allison Rabbitt** knows that donors of all levels are needed to sustain art forms such as opera—every gift matters. With more than 18 years of experience fundraising for some of Seattle's impactful nonprofits, Rabbitt was recently appointed by **General Director Aidan Lang** to lead Seattle Opera's Development Department. Rabbitt will also ensure the completion of the \$28.5 private fundraising campaign for Seattle Opera's new home at Seattle Center.

For Rabbitt, her career in Development is a calling, one to inspire people to use their resources to change the world.

"Community and the arts are just as important to me as food, clothing, and shelter, and I love asking for money because it generates beauty, connection, and gives people meaning to their life," she said. "Seattle Opera will always have more creative ideas for programs than the community can fund. In partnership with the Opera's outstanding Board of Directors and the Development team, I'm thrilled to be able to invite our community to create more joy and fulfill Seattle Opera's mission."

A fundraiser since her days as a Girl Scout on Long Island, giving back is a value that begins with Rabbitt's own family. When her 8-year-old came to work with her one day and was helping put information packets together for Seattle Opera's capital campaign, he offered to give \$3 to support the project. Rabbitt was one proud mom—however, knowing her son, she wanted to see if he might be willing to donate just a little bit more. "My son loves Pokémon cards, which are \$5 for a pack. I asked if he might be willing to stretch his \$3 gift and donate in the amount of a pack of Pokémon cards; I knew that amount would really mean something to him and he thinks the building will be really cool." After looking in his piggy bank, young William was able to make the \$5 donation happen.

With fewer subscribers and an increasingly younger audience to serve, opera companies across the United States are having to rethink their funding models. Engaging donors at every financial level is part of the solution, Rabbitt says. Welcoming people of all socioeconomic backgrounds is also tied to the company's mission of equity.

When the company moves into its new civic home, Seattle Opera at the Center, in December 2018, it will be able to continue breaking down barriers with more room to plan—and execute—programming for people of all ages. These programs include touring performances that travel to schools and retirement communities across Washington State.

"Allison Rabbitt's goal is to make supporting Seattle Opera irresistible," said **General Director Aidan Lang**. "With her proven track record, Allison not only has the passion, but the leadership we need to create a sustainable opera company in the twenty-first century."

Previously, Allison Rabbitt has helped create fundraising success for Seattle Center Foundation, the University of Washington's Henry Art Gallery, and Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences. She led Seattle Opera's Individual Giving team to establish the major and mid-level giving programs, which includes a robust

discovery program. Now, she leads the larger Development team to build sustaining partnerships throughout Puget Sound and to fully integrate donor engagement into every activity at Seattle Opera.

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About Seattle Opera

Established in 1963, Seattle Opera is committed to serving the people of the Pacific Northwest with performances of the highest caliber and through innovative educational and engagement programs for all. Each year, more than 95,000 people attend Seattle Opera performances, and more than 400,000 people of all ages are served through school performances, radio broadcasts, and more. By drawing our communities together, and by offering opera's unique fusion of music and drama, we create life-enhancing experiences that speak deeply to people's hearts and minds. Connect with Seattle Opera on Facebook, Twitter, SoundCloud, and through the [Seattle Opera channel on Classical King FM. 98.1.](#)