

NEWS RELEASE

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New Jersey State Council on the Arts awards New Jersey Opera Theater its prestigious Citation of Excellence

PRINCETON, N.J. – In its first year of eligibility, Princeton-based New Jersey Opera Theater (NJOT) has received one of the prestigious Citations of Excellence awarded by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA). The citation, the NJSCA's highest honor, was presented to NJOT and 27 other New Jersey arts organizations at the Council's recent annual meeting in Trenton.

Of the 20 new organizations receiving funding from NJSCA for the first time this year, New Jersey Opera Theater is the only organization to also receive the Citation of Excellence.

The Citations of Excellence recognize arts organizations that "exhibit the highest standards of excellence in artistry, operations, governance, public benefit and fulfillment of areas of Council priority" according to the Council. In addition to the citation, NJOT received a \$32,500 NJSCA grant to support general operating expenses.

"The Council's support and recognition of NJOT, a young but already exceedingly accomplished entity, is deeply appreciated," said Robert Teweles, chairman of the board of NJOT. "This honor is a testament to the skills and dedication of the entire NJOT family of performers, educators, staff, volunteers and friends."

Since its founding in 2002, NJOT productions have played to consistently sold out houses and received the highest praise from audiences and critics alike, explained Artistic Director Scott Altman who, along with his wife, Lisa, established NJOT in 2002.

"Our group of highly talented and deeply committed artists has been gratified by the public's response to its efforts," Altman said. "We will build on this strong base and continue to bring the highest quality programming to our state and its people."

NJOT is earning national recognition as a leader among regional opera companies, providing high quality opera performances, exceptional educational offerings, and related activities. NJOT seeks to stimulate, promote and satisfy interest in opera, build a strong and diverse audience base for the art form, and foster the development of emerging artists.

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NJOT's future performances include two semi-staged performances of Giacomo Puccini's final masterpiece *Turandot* starring the internationally-renowned soprano Sharon Sweet and Metropolitan Opera tenor Allan Glassman. The first performance of *Turandot* will be Sunday, March 4, on the Matthews Stage at Princeton's McCarter Theatre. The second performance mark NJOT's debut event at the State Theatre in New Brunswick on Sunday, March 11.

More information about NJOT is available on the organization's website at www.njot.org or by calling (609) 799-7700.

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