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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor Ducey's Office Awards Tucson-Serving Arts Organizations with \$2 Million in Recovery Aid

Grant funds to be distributed to Arizona Opera, Arizona Theatre Company, Ballet Tucson, and the Tucson Symphony Orchestra to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19

TUCSON AND PHOENIX, Ariz. (Dec. 2, 2022) – Four Arizona performing arts organizations that serve the Tucson community have been awarded grants ranging from \$250,000 - \$750,000 as part of a \$2 million COVID relief funding distribution from Governor Doug Ducey's Office. The funding will help to support and sustain the arts in the Tucson community. The grant recipients include Arizona Opera, Arizona Theatre Company, Ballet Tucson, and the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, whose performances, training, and educational programs have served the Southern Arizona community for generations, spanning 36 to 93 years.

"The arts in Arizona play a vital role in the quality of life and economic health of our State," said Governor Ducey. "In addition to this year's historic appropriation to the Arizona Commission on the Arts, these new grants will support the community organizations that serve the Tucson metropolitan area."

Arizona Opera performs in both Phoenix and Tucson and is proud to have led the more than two-year effort of securing this support through the Governor's Office, resulting in a significant infusion of much-needed arts funding into the City of Tucson, for the benefit of its community.

"We're incredibly grateful to the State of Arizona as well as to Governor Ducey's Office for allocating these relief funds in support of Arizona Opera and our colleagues at the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Arizona Theatre Company, and Ballet Tucson," said Arizona Opera's President and General Director Joseph Specter. "In an effort to secure meaningful investment in the cultural vitality of Tucson, Arizona Opera's birth city, we were also able to lift up these other impactful Tucson arts organizations, and we're grateful for the opportunity to have done so," he added.

Specter said he hopes the funding effort, on which Arizona Opera partnered with DeMenna Public Affairs, inspires additional support from other institutions and individuals for Arizona arts and culture

institutions, which he said are critical to Arizonans' quality of life and economic vitality and worthy of support and public investment.

"We're very grateful to the Governor for this very generous grant, and to Arizona Opera, for taking the lead on this advocacy on behalf of performing arts organizations in Southern Arizona," said Tucson Symphony Orchestra's President and CEO Paul Meecham. "This grant gives us the opportunity to invest in initiatives to build more diverse audiences for classical music in Southern Arizona, and as we recover from a time of reduced activity because of the pandemic, it also enables the Symphony to support employment of more than 250 artists and staff, so this grant is not just about sustaining the arts, but also about sustaining jobs."

The pandemic had a devastating impact on Arizona's arts sector, especially in the performing arts world. Many Arizona arts organizations are still recovering from the impacts of forgoing in-person performances for over a year, and are working diligently to identify how they can best serve the community in the years to come, through both traditional and innovative approaches. While the road to recovery is an arduous one, public and private funding allows arts organizations to move forward. The arts, whether it be theatre, music, dance, or other forms of expression, are needed now more than ever for community connection, healing, and enjoyment.

"As the State theatre we're honored that the Governor's office recognizes the critical role Arizona Theatre Company and other performing arts organizations play in creating a vibrant community," said Arizona Theatre Company's Executive Director Geri Wright. "This support will help Arizona Theatre Company continue our legacy of providing world-class theatre and education programming for the communities we serve, all while assisting in building a sustainable organization, post pandemic."

A sustaining presence of the arts and its programs in Arizona's schools, theatres, and convention centers helps strengthen our communities. These important arts organizations, all of which provide significant amounts of service in Tucson and Southern Arizona, will receive the following funding relief:

- \$500,000 to Arizona Opera
- \$750,000 to Tucson Symphony Orchestra
- \$500,000 to Arizona Theatre Company
- \$250,000 to Ballet Tucson

"Performing arts organizations were impacted heavily by the pandemic and we're all still working to emerge from that successfully," said Ballet Tucson's Artistic Director Margaret Mullin. "We believe in the power of live art and our art form's ability to foster inspiration, hope, imagination, and resilience, which we need now more than ever. Ballet Tucson is grateful to Governor Ducey's Office for providing this critical funding, and to Arizona Opera for its advocacy, which will allow us to connect with our community more deeply and to deliver exceptional dance experiences to Tucsonans."

Programming for Arizona Opera, Arizona Theatre Company, Ballet Tucson, and Tucson Symphony Orchestra takes place in a variety of Tucson venues, such as the Tucson Convention Center, Tucson Symphony Center, The Linda Ronstadt Music Hall, and the Temple of Music and Art, as well as

numerous schools and other locations across the city and Southern Arizona as part of the organizations' community and educational programs.

About Arizona Opera

Arizona Opera, which recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary, produces fully-staged operas, concerts, and collaborative programs throughout the state of Arizona each season, and is among only a handful of companies in the U.S. that regularly performs in more than one city. Arizona Opera elevates the transformative power of storytelling through music, cultivating community, and strengthening a state and people as adventurous and diverse as the place they call home. Since its inaugural year in 1971, Arizona Opera has produced more than 200 fully-staged operas and concerts. The company's artistic history is rich with a blend of opera's repertoire featuring baroque, bel canto, and verismo works, turn-of-the-century masterpieces, operettas, and contemporary opera, including multiple world premiere commissions.

About Arizona Theatre Company

Arizona Theatre Company's (ATC) performances bring people together to experience essential stories, from reimagined classics to contemporary plays, original works, and innovative musicals fostering continued conversation beyond the theatre walls. Founded in 1966 and celebrating its 55th season, ATC is led by Executive Director Geri Wright and Incoming Kasser Family Artistic Director Matt August. ATC operates in two major cities and is the preeminent professional theatre in Arizona, recognized as the official State theatre.

About Ballet Tucson

Ballet Tucson is Southern Arizona's only professional ballet company and is dedicated to providing exceptional and accessible dance experiences to their community. Now entering its 37th season, Ballet Tucson brings five unique and inspiring performances to the stage annually, including their award-winning production of *The Nutcracker*, now in partnership with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra. The company presents iconic works by legendary choreographers like George Balanchine and innovative new pieces created by artists of today, including Justin Peck, choreographer of Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story*, all performed by stellar professional dancers from around the world. The School of Ballet Tucson offers a wide variety of classes to dancers of all ages and provides children across Southern Arizona with the opportunity to experience the power of live dance as performers and through their ticket subsidy program.

About the Tucson Symphony Orchestra

The first professional symphony orchestra in the Southwest, the TSO is the longest continuously performing professional arts organization in Arizona, where it impacts more than 120,000 lives each year. The mission of the organization is to engage, educate and transform our community through live musical experiences of the highest quality. Under the baton of Music Director José Luis Gomez, the TSO engages with audiences of all ages through concerts, educational programming, and outreach.

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