



**SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF PERFORMING & VISUAL ARTS**  
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## **SUU OPERA PRODUCTION SCORES WIN IN COMPETITION SPONSORED BY NATIONAL OPERA ASSOCIATION**

**Southern Utah University, Cedar City, Utah:** A Utah premiere of a contemporary opera captured the attention of the **National Opera Association's** judging committee and it was a victory for **SUU Opera**. **SUU's Department of Music** took **3<sup>rd</sup> Prize in Division I** for its production of Michael Ching's ***Speed Dating Tonight***. The opera was produced in November 2013.

A video submission of the performance was submitted to the National Opera Association's (NOA) judging committee which evaluated the performance in a blind competition so the members were not aware of the universities competing. NOA Opera Production Competition Chair, **Kenneth E. Wood**, Assistant Professor of Music at Virginia Commonwealth University, contacted **Carol Ann Modesitt**, SUU Director of Opera and Voice, about the victory. Southern Utah University will be awarded the prize at NOA's convention on January 10, 2015 in Greensboro, North Carolina. This marks the second time an SUU Opera performance was recognized by NOA. In January 2013, four SUU students performed a ten-minute scene from Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Old Maid and the Thief* at the annual NOA conference in Portland, Oregon, and were awarded second place in the undergraduate division.

Directed by **Carol Ann Modesitt**, ***Speed Dating Tonight*** featured a cast of SUU vocal students including **Rebecca Dayley, Emilee Hales, James Harris, Luke Johnson, Jayson LeBaron, Lindsey Lopez, Emma McGuire, Christina Meikle, Janese Pentico, Annie Powell, Sarah Stout, Jocelyn Taylor** and **Sara Thorson**. **Dr. Willem van Schalkwyk** was musical director for the performance.

According to Professor Modesitt, "I am excited to learn that we did so well in this competition. The other two institutions that placed first and second did standard operatic literature, and I am pleased that we performed a new contemporary opera that was able to hold its own against Mozart and Menotti. When we did this last fall, it really appealed to both students and the community with its fresh take on the current

dating scene in contemporary society. I am proud of our students and our department. We hear all the time about the outstanding things that happen at Southern Utah University and how we rank against other universities in the state. This is one more example of the quality of instruction that happens in the College of Performing and Visual Arts."

The **National Opera Association** was founded in 1955, under the auspices of the National Music Council. The National Opera Association seeks to promote a greater appreciation of opera and music theatre, to enhance pedagogy and performing activities, and to increase performance opportunities by supporting projects that improve the scope and quality of opera. Members in the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and Australia participate in a wide array of activities in support of this mission. Through its prosperous history, the NOA has primarily served education and performance activities in academic institutions and small regional opera companies. The organization especially welcomes participation of college and university opera workshop directors, students, composers, librettists, scholars, and anyone interested in opera and opera education. NOA holds an annual convention featuring performances, panels, workshops, and other continuing-education opportunities for opera educators, professionals, and students. Major activities of the NOA include the encouragement of young artists and composers through competitions and performance opportunities, sharing resources for collegiate and regional productions, and publication of scholarly articles. Special projects of the NOA include Opera for Youth, the Legacy Project, and the Sacred in Opera.

## **ABOUT THE COLLEGE**

The **Southern Utah University College of Performing and Visual Arts** is comprised of nationally accredited departments of Art and Design, Music, Theatre Arts and Dance, as well as a Center for Shakespeare Studies and a graduate program in Arts Administration. The College offers 16 different degree areas, including liberal arts Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees; professional Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Fine Arts in art and theatre degrees; and a Master of Fine Arts in Arts Administration degree. The Center for Shakespeare Studies offers a minor in Shakespeare Studies. More than 60 full- and part-time faculty and staff are engaged in teaching and mentoring over 550 majors in the College. Over 1100 students enroll each year in over 195 arts classes on the SUU campus. The College presents 100 performances, lectures, presentations, and exhibitions each year. The College's affiliate organizations include the Braithwaite Fine Arts Gallery, Utah Shakespeare Festival, and the SUU Ballroom Dance Company. For more information about the College of Performing and Visual Arts, contact the Office of the Dean (435) 865-8561, or by e-mail at [cpvamktg@suu.edu](mailto:cpvamktg@suu.edu).