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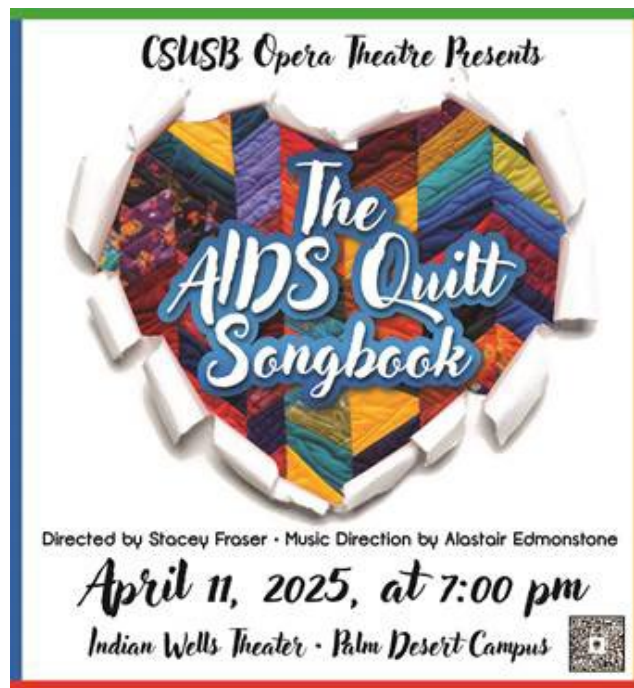
PRESS RELEASE

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CSUSB Opera Theatre to present groundbreaking staged adaptation of ‘The AIDS Quilt Songbook’ at CSUSB Palm Desert Campus

PALM DESERT, Calif. – The CSUSB Opera Theatre will reprise their production of the “AIDS Quilt Songbook” at the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus on Friday, April 11, at 7 p.m.

Tickets are now on sale on the [CSUSB Music Purple Pass webpage](#).

In addition to purchasing a ticket to the performance, attendees must also purchase a CSUSB parking permit on the [ParkMobile website](#), the ParkMobile app, or by scanning the QR code on one of the green signs in the campus parking lot – using Zone 7100. Physical parking permit dispensers are also located on campus for attendees to enter their license plate information. The cost to park on campus is \$10 per vehicle.

The “AIDS Quilt Songbook” is a collection of songs and poems dedicated to those impacted by AIDS — honoring lives lost, acknowledging the stigma and fear surrounding the disease, and offering a tribute to those affected since its emergence in the early 1980s.

The National Endowment of the Arts-winning [CSUSB Opera Theatre](#) is now in its 18th season, having produced a rich and diverse repertoire of music theatre works that range from Mozart to Philip Glass and from Missy Mazzoli to Astor Piazzolla. The multiple award-winning ensemble is known for its performances of interesting and challenging works that are rarely performed or are on the cutting edge of 20th and 21st-century opera.

This is the first known staged adaptation of the “AIDS Quilt Songbook,” directed by Stacey Fraser with music direction by Alastair Edmonstone.

The 90-minute production at the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus will feature recently composed songs, including pieces by Gordan Beeferman, Herschel Garfein, Eric Reda, Michael Djupstrom and Rachel Peters. A new song, composed by University of California, Riverside graduate student Rory Fewer, specifically for the CSUSB Opera Theatre, will receive its world premiere.

The songbook showcases choreography by CSUSB instructor Terrill Corletto and costume design by Catherine Erickson. Professional artist Kevin Blickfeldt, known for his singing with the celebrated opera boy band VOX on America’s Got Talent, and critically acclaimed baritone Jawan Jenkins will join the students of the CSUSB Opera Theatre for this special one-night performance.

The original “AIDS Quilt Songbook” was commissioned by HIV-infected baritone William Parker, who wanted to raise money and bring awareness to the disease. He felt that the classical community was not doing enough, and this prompted him to take on the enormous task of engaging prominent composers and poets to write music and text that would directly address the horrors of the disease. The collection was intended to be a companion project to the Memorial Quilt organized by the NAMES Project Foundation. Just as a new square continued to be added to the quilt itself, Parker hoped that new songs would continue to be added to the songbook.

The original 18 songs commissioned by Parker were performed in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in 1992 and later published by Boosey and Hawkes in 1993. A recording was scheduled

for the next morning after the premiere, but Parker was too ill to sing. He died just a year later in 1993.

Fraser says that she and her colleagues began discussing the idea of a collaboration, and together, they successfully applied for and won a Pathways to Success Title V Grant to help realize the project.

“It has been my great pleasure to be working with my fantastic colleagues on this special project,” she said. “We are so appreciative of the support we have received, including accolades from several of the composers whose works we feature in the show. I am overwhelmed by their generosity in sharing these songs with us, as well as their incredible support for our original staging.”

The university cast features Nicholas Flores, Ed Garcia, David Henry, Gabriel Orozco, Nathan Parsons, Cassandra Perez, Christian Quevedo, Maddox Martinez and Angelica Ochoa-Garcia and guest dancers Sean Pickel and Brandon Yerigan.

About the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus: The CSUSB Palm Desert Campus is dedicated to providing a transformative educational experience in the Coachella Valley. With a focus on academic excellence and community engagement, the campus offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs designed to meet the diverse needs of its students and the region.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the Office of Marketing and Communications at msinger@csusb.edu or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the PDC website at www.csusb.edu/pdc.