



FESTIVAL  
OPERA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FESTIVAL OPERA ANNOUNCES SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONS  
TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



*Jim Bell*

Walnut Creek, CA - The Festival Opera Association announced today that six new members, possessing a broad range of expertise, have joined its board of directors effective January 2009. The company also noted that **Jim Bell**, president of Bell Investment Advisors, Oakland, has been elected to the post of association chair for the 2009 year. A long-time supporter of arts in the East Bay, Bell joined the Festival Opera board in 2008 and has served on the development and finance committees.

Joining the Festival Opera board in January are **William Barlow, Jr.** of Barlow and Hughan CPAs, San Francisco; **Mark Cederborg** of Cederborg and Bret LLP in Walnut Creek; **Mary Beth Kelly**, Operational Excellence Coordinator for Chevron, San Ramon; **Donald Morris Jr.** of Sitzmann, Morris, and Lavis, Oakland; **Erica Simpson**, Director of Promotions and Events for the *San Francisco Chronicle*; and **Laurie Snyder**, manager at UCSF PainCARE in San Francisco.

"We're very pleased to have these distinguished individuals joining the board. Each brings skills that can be beneficial to Festival Opera, as well as an enthusiasm for enhancing performing arts in the East Bay," remarked outgoing chair **David Kingsbury**, who will remain on the board as immediate past chair. "We believe the new energy on the board, as well as our success in meeting the \$25,000 challenge grant from the Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation late last year, are positive signs of the company's ability to successfully negotiate the challenges that we, and all arts organizations, face in these recessionary times."

**Festival Opera**, under executive director **Helen Sheaff** and artistic director **Michael Morgan**, has emerged as the third-largest opera company in the San Francisco Bay Area and one of the top three professional arts companies based in Walnut Creek. Founded in 1991, the non-profit organization has become a showcase for young, emerging artists. Festival Opera's 2009 season will feature new productions of Puccini's *Turandot* in July and Gounod's *Faust* in August. For more information, visit [www.festivalopera.com](http://www.festivalopera.com).

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