



Media Release

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Dallas Opera's TDO Network exceeds 9 million Facebook viewership just four months after launch, with the number of weekly engagements ranking the new initiative among the top-five, most-popular international opera company digital sites.

[TDO Network](#), a new digital initiative from The Dallas Opera launched March 18, 2020, is racking up impressive numbers according to Facebook analytics that show viewership already topping the 9 million mark, with the number of weekly engagements from viewers ranking TDO network among the top-five international opera company digital sites.

TDO Network is unique among the world's professional opera company digital ventures in that it offers an ever-evolving collection of original content: distinct programs created by and for members of the worldwide opera community—artists, administrators, educators, and opera aficionados. Program curators and hosts, many of them singers of national and international

renown, are also social media influencers who believe in advancing the art form digitally, through exploration and conversation.

TDO Network can be seen worldwide through The Dallas Opera's Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube channels and is hosted on the company's website. Viewers from more than 50 countries have interacted with the network, with those from the United States, Mexico, Italy, Germany, and Canada topping the "tune-in" list.

Originator and curator of the TDO Network is David Lomeli, director of artistic administration for The Dallas Opera, and a renowned tenor who has degrees in marketing and computer science. He is also a classical music social media influencer in his own right with an impressive online following.

Explaining the genesis of the TDO Network, Lomeli says that "we were in the middle of *Don Carlo* rehearsals when the pandemic hit, forcing us to cancel the rest of our Dallas Opera season. Everything "live" was gone. Baritone Lucas Meachem was in town preparing for his role debut as Rodrigo, and the two of us decided to go for it and present him in a recital, film it by phone, and put it on Facebook and Instagram live," Lomeli explains. "We promoted it online, shared it organically, and within two days we had 50,000 Facebook views. That's when I knew we were really on to something."

"I also knew that if we wanted to stay connected with our community—audiences and artists—the only way we could do it was to be on their screens constantly with lots of good content and

through every digital platform available to us. That's where the idea for a network came from—and with the blessing of Ian Derrer, Dallas Opera's Kern Wildenthal General Director and CEO, we went to work."

Lomeli sought out potential program hosts who were technologically savvy artists, all of whom were already social media influencers with the knowhow and willingness to become original content creators for Dallas Opera. "The goal," Lomeli says, "was and is to present an array of constantly evolving programming that is balanced in gender, ethnicity, and opinion. We want to engage, inform, question, and entertain."

Program content runs the gamut, from interviews with major artists hosted by Maestro Emmanuel Villaume, to live performances, lifestyle features, in-depth discussions on diversity in the arts, comedy segments, singer coachings, "big issue" explorations, advice on how to succeed in the opera business, and more.

Program hosts create their own content with final editing and oversight by Lomeli and assistant producer Annie Penner. The majority of guests and hosts, though not all, have some affiliation with The Dallas Opera, either as performers or members of the artistic or administrative team. Programs run on a weekly basis for a minimum of four weeks.

Lomeli said that through TDO Network, The Dallas Opera became the first professional company to present artists interviewing artists in the time of COVID-19.

Lomeli points out that TDO Network is tracking particularly well with the 18-34 year old demographic, which, he says “is all about content and presentation. We’re taking lessons from sports, video games, and major social media influencers from a variety of fields, and we’re applying it to the business of opera. We are promoting strategically, and we’re constantly analyzing how individual shows are doing and “tweaking” as necessary.”

Ian Derrer said that he and the Board leadership immediately got behind the idea of the TDO Network. “When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and forced us off the stage until March of 2021, we knew we had to step outside the box to find new and creative ways of staying connected and engaging our audiences, and really reaching out to the community as a whole. Our very survival depends on it, and unlike the Metropolitan Opera, Dallas Opera does not have a vast archive of great performances to stream. But we can stay relevant and interesting by exploring issues facing our art form, giving opera fans the chance to get to know established and aspiring artists ‘up close and personal,’ and sometimes, just plain entertaining people through programming they might think they’d never see coming out of a ‘serious’ international opera company.”

“And of course,” Derrer adds, “one of the tremendous advantages of using social media is that it gives us the opportunity to pivot-at-will and alter programming to address changing circumstances, needs, and community concerns. There’s no question that TDO Network will continue to evolve in the aftermath of the immediate COVID-19 crisis. What won’t change will be the network’s heavy reliance on compelling human stories.”

Three months after TDO Network's launch, Lomeli says that several new shows are already in the planning stages, including some Spanish-language entries.

Two of the network's early successes, the comedy special "[Late Night with Liz](#)," with soprano [Elizabeth Sutphen](#), and [Nicholas Brownlee](#)'s "[Hook, Push and Pray](#)," described as a show for "opera nerds," are currently on hiatus but available in the TDO Network archive on the company's website.

The current TDO Network line-up is as follows:

(Mondays, 9 am Central Time) "[The News with OperaWire](#)." Arts reporters [David](#) and [Francisco Salazar](#), founders of the online program *OperaWire*, create a special weekly roundup of the biggest stories in the opera world specifically for TDO Network.

(Mondays, 1 pm CDT) "[In the Chair](#)." [Sarah Norton](#), wig and make-up designer for The Dallas Opera, introduces audiences to the backstage wizards who make the onstage magic happen: prop masters, stagehands, scenery designers, and more!

(Tuesdays, 1 pm CDT) "[Living Your Best Life](#)." American soprano [Deanna Breiwick](#) shares tips and techniques, especially for singers, on finding the joy in everyday life---from physical and mental fitness to travel tips to self-care and cooking for fun and health.

(Tuesdays, 9 pm CDT) “[Diva Who Hustles.](#)” Soprano [Suzanne Vinnik](#), also a widely recognized portrait photographer and fashion designer, is joined by savvy guests who share insights on what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur either in, or out of, the opera business.

(Wednesdays, 1 pm CDT) “[#AskMaestro.](#)” [Emmanuel Villaume](#), celebrated international conductor and Dallas Opera’s Mrs. Eugene McDermott music director, talks with a “who’s who” of big-name artists in revealing, hour-long interviews. Guests have included Morris Robinson, Diana Damrau, Matthew Polenzani, Susan Graham, Ailyn Pérez, Angela Gheorghiu, and more. Viewers are invited to submit questions.

(Wednesdays, 5 pm CDT) “[Isa Coachings.](#)” Star mezzo-soprano offers young artists the rare opportunity for a one-on-one coaching session—in front of a digital audience—with a legend in the field.

(Thursdays, 1 pm CDT) “[Taking the Stage with Kristian and Quo.](#)” Dig-deep, no-holds-barred conversations on education, community engagement, equity, and diversity with TDO Director of Education [Kristian Roberts](#), and Education and Company Culture Manager [Quodesia Johnson](#), both of whom are nationally recognized for their work.

(Thursday, 9 pm CDT) “[The Quick.](#)” American baritone [Michael Mayes](#) cuts to the quick with deeply personal conversations about the magical moments and human connections that opera makes possible.

(Fridays, 1 pm CDT) "[The Middleclass Artist.](#)" Tenor and writer [Zach Finkelstein](#) gives young artists important lessons they may not have learned at the conservatory or in university—in other words, what it takes to make a living in the music business, including living life as a freelancer.

(Fridays, 9 pm CDT) "[Nick @ 9.](#)" Singer, successful podcaster, and host of one of TDO's inaugural shows, "Hook Push and Pray," [Nicholas Brownlee](#) presents what may be opera's first online variety show that incorporates performance, a "March Madness"—style competition to crown the greatest opera singer of all time, and even modern-day parlor games, including a contest to find out what married opera couples *really* know about each other.

(Saturdays, 9 am CDT) "[Conductors' Collective.](#)" The classical music business is experiencing massive changes. [Lina Gonzalez-Granados](#) and [Kensho Watanabe](#), two of today's most dynamic young conductors, look at the role of leadership in the ever-evolving and complicated musical landscape.

(Saturdays, 1 pm CDT)/Live on Instagram) "[Creative Conversations.](#)" [David Lomeli](#), Dallas Opera director of artistic administration and casting consultant for The Bavarian State Opera in Munich offers a live, down-to-earth Q and A about what it takes to break into the opera business—including how to conduct a successful audition, the casting process, and available careers in the opera industry, interviews with those "who've already made it," and aspirants looking for their first break.

(Sunday, 12 pm or 2 pm CDT) "[TDO Sunday Live Recitals](#)." Outstanding artists perform works that inspire and touch them personally—from opera to gospel to much-loved show tunes.

(Sunday, 2 pm CDT/Live on Instagram) "[Live from the Pit](#)." [Grace Browning](#), principal harpist for The Santa Fe Opera, shares experiences with the artists who make opera happen: musicians “from the pit,” as well as singers, conductors, and composers. Live performances are part of the show.

To watch TDO Network episodes, go to dallasopera.org/tdonetwork.

ABOUT THE DALLAS OPERA

One of the leading opera companies in the country, The Dallas Opera has an extraordinary legacy of world-class productions and thrilling premieres featuring the greatest operatic artists of our time. Inaugurated in 1957 with a concert featuring the incomparable Maria Callas, TDO is known for the notable U.S. debuts of a host of legendary artists including Plácido Domingo, Dame Joan Sutherland, Jon Vickers, Franco Zeffirelli, and Sir David McVicar. The company has long been an industry leader and innovator through groundbreaking initiatives including the Hart Institute for Women Conductors, free public simulcasts, acclaimed art song recitals, the national vocal competition, special concerts, and outstanding family and award-winning education programs. TDO’s home is the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, a jewel in the Dallas Arts District. As one of the largest performing arts employers in North Texas, TDO is proudly committed to diversity, onstage and off, and is a major contributor to the economic vitality and international cultural reputation of this region.

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