

## HECTOR ARMIENTA COMPOSER'S BIOGRAPHY

Hector Armienta, a nationally recognized Mexican-American composer, focuses on creating work that explores the Mexican and Mexican-American cultural experience. His awards and commissions include those from Meet the Composer, the National Endowment for the Arts, Arts International, Opera Pacific, the Pacific Symphony, two San Francisco Arts Commissions, Oakland East Bay Symphony, and Western Stage Theater. His work for orchestra and theater has received support from three NEA grants in artistic excellence.

As an opera and music theater composer, he draws on stories and music that represent his bi-cultural roots. His music theater trilogy, *Aguas Ancestrales/Ancient Waters*, is such an example. Inspired by the life of Mr. Armienta's grandmother, the trilogy draws upon the natural and spiritual element of water. It controls the fate of all the characters. Parts of the trilogy have been performed by Opera Pacific, Western Stage Theater, The York Theater and Teatro Latea in New York, and, Philadelphia's Center City Opera. His bilingual children's opera based on a Mexican folk tale, *Los Coyotes y Las Conejas*, has been performed by the Music Theater Collaborative, Forth Worth Opera, and Tulsa Opera. *Cuentos de Peregrinacion/Tales of Pilgrimage*, which includes text based on real-life experiences of those living the East San Jose community, premiered in San Jose in March 2014 and subsequently in Guadalajara's Teatro Degollado. Most recently, he has acquired the rights to develop Rudolfo Anaya's epic novel, *Bless Me Ultima*, into an opera. Arizona Opera will have a reading of the work in 2016.

Mr. Armienta is also the founder and director of Opera Cultura, whose mission is to explore music theater and opera through a cross-cultural lens. It is through this organization that Mr. Armienta develops some of his music theater projects and creates opportunities for young people from economically disadvantaged communities to experience the arts. He holds a BM degree in composition from California Institute of the Arts and an MM degree in composition from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.