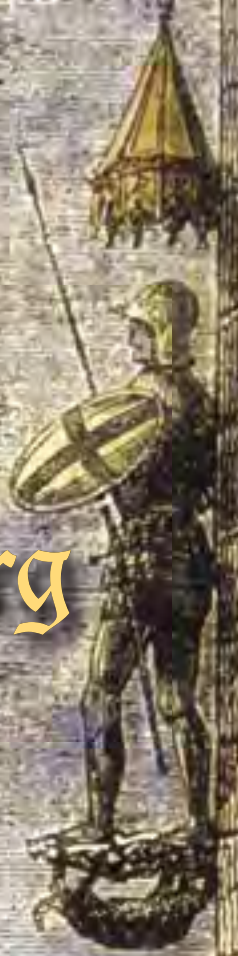




SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA 2015-16 SEASON

RICHARD WAGNER
Die Meistersinger
von Nürnberg



encore
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GUCCI

Vol. 93, No. 3 • 2015–16 Season • November 2015

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On the cover:

Anonymous
The House of Painter Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) in Nuremberg, Germany, 1841 color engraving
Bridgeman Art Library

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Manai D.


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A Message from the Leaders of San Francisco Opera

Dear Opera-goers,

As San Francisco Opera moves into the second half of the fall season, we enter the time of year of giving and sharing. We sincerely thank our patrons and donors who contribute so much. You share our belief that a top-tier opera company in San Francisco is vital to the Bay Area's wonderful quality of life and status as an international arts destination. In November, we offer two blockbuster productions—Wagner's monumental *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and Rossini's ever-popular *Barber of Seville*—followed in December by the American premiere of the Gordon Getty/Claude Debussy double-bill *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Along with family workshops and our annual Adler Fellows gala concert, San Francisco Opera is proud to present you with the gift of opera this holiday season.



From left to right: Keith B. Geeslin, David Gockley, John A. Gunn

And there is more to come. In February, we will realize a longstanding aspiration with the opening of the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera in the adjacent Veterans Building. This gives the Company, for the very first time, a year-round performance presence in the new Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater. In August 2016, we will welcome Matthew Shilvock as our seventh general director when David Gockley retires after ten wonderful years with the Company. David leaves behind a great legacy and a Company with remarkably gifted artists, including our outstanding orchestra and chorus, and an excellent and dedicated staff.

This success would not be possible without your continued dedication and support, for which we are deeply grateful. Producing great opera, which enriches the lives of more than 250,000 patrons each year, requires an immense investment of time, talent, and resources. As you consider your options for year-end giving, we invite you to make a commitment to San Francisco Opera. Your generosity maintains our financial stability and ensures San Francisco Opera's standing as a distinguished artistic leader both in the Bay Area and internationally.

We are honored to share our season with you.

David Gockley
General Director

Keith B. Geeslin
President

John A. Gunn
Chairman of the Board

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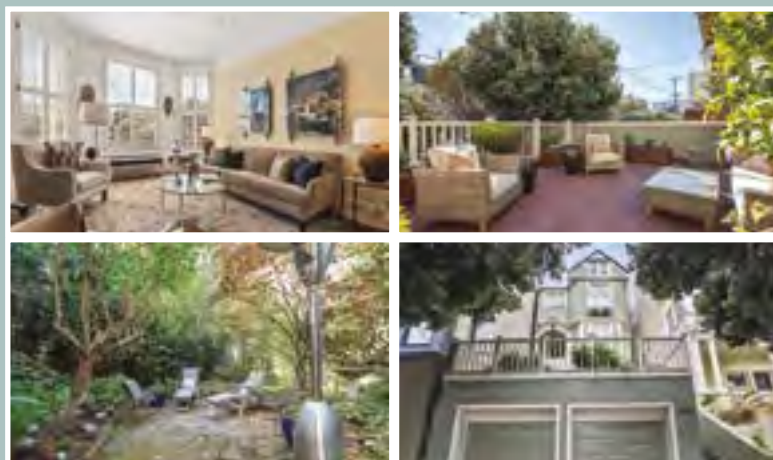
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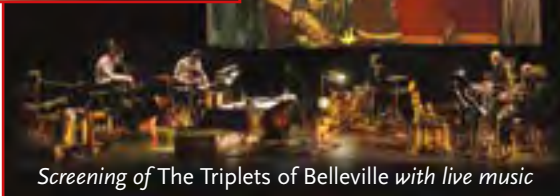
Director Puts Her Stamp on New SF Opera Lab



Schubert's Winterreise with baritone Matthias Goerne and art by William Kentridge



Elkhanah Pulitzer



Screening of The Triplets of Belleville with live music

Beginning in early March, audiences will discover what Elkhanah Pulitzer, the first Director of Programming for the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera, has in store for the new 299-seat Dianne & Tad Taube Atrium Theater. According to Pulitzer, intimate experiences—all offered under the moniker SF Opera Lab—will provide San Francisco Opera with a unique opportunity to think creatively and develop new methods and ideas to infuse the art form in a less formal setting.

“I am thinking of it more in terms of the Opera’s R&D branch, a testing ground and incubator for new ideas and working methods across the entire Company, with an active flow of creative energy back and forth between the Wilsey Center and the Opera House,” she says.

Pulitzer is involved in every facet of curating this new space, from helping cultivate new talent to reaching out to younger audiences with more intimate work. “Every week is full of surprises,” she says, “and I’ve learned to do things that I certainly didn’t anticipate.”

Born in Boston and raised in St. Louis, Pulitzer was an assistant director at San Francisco Opera from 2008 to 2013 and maintains a freelance directing career, most recently a critically acclaimed *Lulu* by Alban Berg in a new chamber reduction for Berkeley-based West Edge Opera. Pulitzer, who is a descendant of journalism pioneer Joseph Pulitzer, is also board vice president of the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, which supports experimentation in art installations and live programming.

SF Opera Lab launches with Schubert’s song cycle *Winterreise* featuring German baritone Matthias Goerne in a theatrical production designed by South African artist William Kentridge. Other highlights of the inaugural season include *Svadba-Wedding*, an *a cappella* opera for six female voices written by Serbian-Canadian composer Ana Sokolović, followed in April with screenings of the 2003 animated French film *The Triplets of Belleville* featuring a live chanteuse and musicians.

“SF Opera Lab is not your parent’s opera, but also not opera light,” she says. “It is a litmus test for what opera can be and can become.”

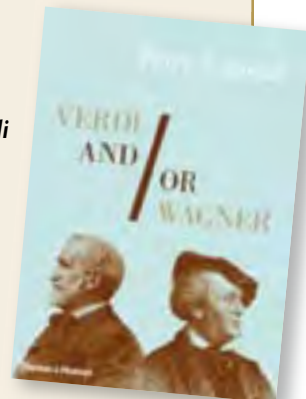


OPERA SHOP HOLIDAY RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepare for next summer’s *Don Carlo* with the high-definition DVD from the Salzburg Festival. Antonio Pappano conducts an all-star cast including Jonas Kaufmann, Anja Harteros, and Thomas Hampson.



If you can’t get enough of Verdi, there’s Peter Conrad’s book *Verdi and/or Wagner* (Thames & Hudson), an exploration of the lives and works of Verdi and Wagner as well as their respective legacies to the present day.



Finnish soprano Karita Mattila makes her long awaited return to San Francisco Opera in next summer’s *Jenůfa* where she will play the role of Kostelnička.

Hear her sing the title role in the stunning 2001 Covent Garden recording with Anja Silja, Jerry Hadley, and Bernard Haitink conducting.





Notes from the General Director

The Underground Surfaces

A vigorous underground movement in the creation and production of new opera has burst into view, and I am excited to tell you about it, especially since San Francisco Opera intends to be part of it with our new SF Opera Lab programming in the Taube Theater next door.

There are small—even tiny—pieces with two to five singers, up to thirteen in the orchestra, and talented production teams. They work on tiny budgets, in theaters holding 200–400 persons, and charge ticket prices ranging from \$50 to \$75. Small, gutsy companies like American Opera Projects (N.Y.C.) and producers like Beth Morrison (Prototype Festival and Beth Morrison Projects) have doggedly willed this work into being and produced it with a flair that no one in our business can overlook or ignore. Iconic works are David T. Little’s *Dog Days*, Lena Auerbach’s *The Blind*, *Paul’s Case* by Gregory Spears, and *Svadba-Wedding* by Ana Sokolović, which will have its West Coast premiere in March at SF Opera Lab.

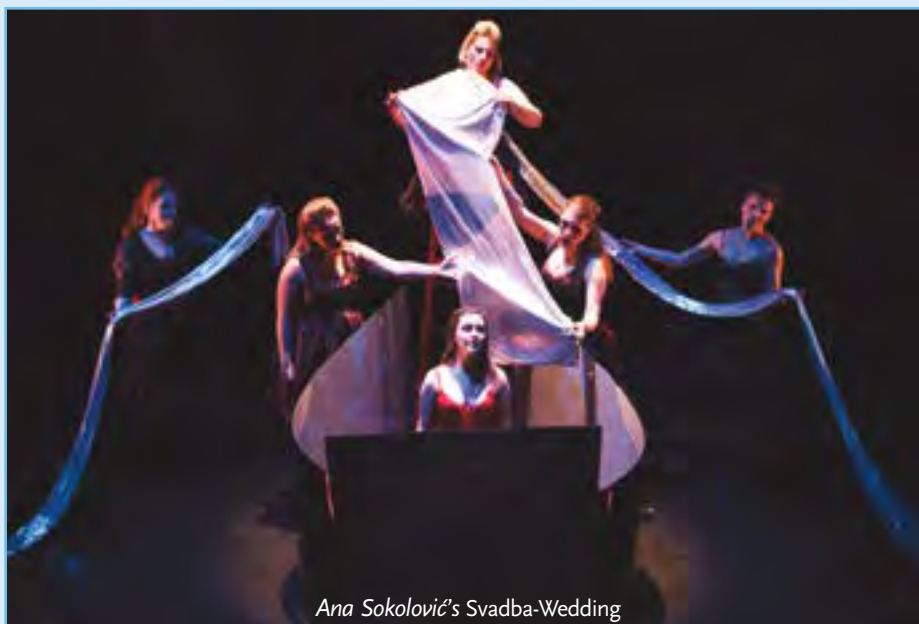
San Francisco Opera will thus be the latest traditional opera company to extend its program to include these remarkable operas, joining with the opera companies of Philadelphia, Fort Worth,

Cincinnati, and Los Angeles. We all are trying to engage younger audiences who respond positively to the venues (like Redcat in Los Angeles), the setting (informal), and the pricing (affordable). The atmosphere of a sell-out in these intimate venues is electric.

While these are certainly not works for big opera houses, they are musically sophisticated and theatrically provocative. I hesitate to use the word “hip,” but there it is.

Aside from the new audiences these pieces attract, there are other advantages. A traditional opera company can involve itself with new works and creative artists for a fraction of what larger contemporary works cost. Artistic risks can be taken which don’t require selling the ranch or selling out a vast opera house. Composers can get experience and exposure, leading to bigger projects. On the basis of *Svadba-Wedding*’s success in Toronto, Aix-en-Provence, and elsewhere, the Canadian Opera Company feels it can risk a main stage production by Ms. Sokolović. Good for them, and good for her. It is the system, such as it is, working.

Don’t miss *Svadba-Wedding!* 🍷



DOMINIC M. MERCIER / OPERA PHILADELPHIA

Ana Sokolović’s Svadba-Wedding



Front row: Julie Adams, Nian Wang,
Zanda Švėde, Maria Valdes,
Jacqueline Piccolino

Middle row: Ronny Michael Greenberg,
Edward Nelson, Noah Lindquist, Efraín Solís

Back row: Matthew Stump,
Anthony Reed, Chong Wang

The Future Is Now: Adler Fellows Gala Concert

December 12 at 7:30 p.m.

Join the San Francisco Opera Adler fellows for a once-in-a-lifetime performance as they present an evening of favorite opera scenes and arias in *The Future Is Now: Adler Fellows Gala Concert* on Saturday, December 12 at 7:30 p.m. at San Francisco's Herbst Theatre. The 2015 Adler Fellows include sopranos Julie Adams, Jacqueline Piccolino, and Maria Valdes; mezzo-sopranos Zanda Švėde and Nian Wang; tenor Chong Wang; baritones Edward Nelson and Efraín Solís; bass-baritone Matthew Stump; bass Anthony Reed; and pianist/apprentice coaches Ronny Michael Greenberg and Noah Lindquist. For more information and to purchase tickets, call the Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330 or visit sfopera.com/futureisnow.



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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA *Profile*

Jarrood Bell

Chief Information Officer



SCOTT WALL

Jarrood Bell considers himself to be somewhat of an anomaly at San Francisco Opera. He had never seen an opera before he was hired as the Company's Chief Information Officer (CIO), after a long and successful career at an information technology consulting firm in the Bay Area. "After experiencing the full life cycle of start-up existence, I was ready for a job that is more meaningful to the world—do some good, if you will," says Bell. "What the Opera was looking for spoke to my strengths and to what I do well. There was a great deal of opportunity to make a difference quickly, modernize the way the Company operates, and help an amazing arts organization create this beautiful art form."

Bell started at San Francisco Opera in the late summer of 2013 and soon realized that his first order of business was a drastic overhaul of the website. "It was at least six years old and a lot of things have changed when it comes to web design and interface. I wanted a site that really conveys the beautiful thing we do on stage here."

WEBSITE ENHANCEMENTS

There was also a practical reason for San Francisco Opera to create a new website. "Google has changed the way in which it ranks websites; if you don't have a mobile site, they basically suppress your value or your search results," says Bell. "More than 60 percent of our web traffic is mobile, so if you don't have a site that works well on smart phones and tablets, you lose more than half of your audience."

Bell found Mule Design, a local web design firm with a matching design philosophy, and the resulting new website launched in early October. "The biggest difference is that we now have a fully

responsive website; it delivers the same content to a user, whether they are on their phone or behind a 50-inch screen. No more pinching and zooming in on microscopic text, but instead large images, easy to read, and vibrant colors. And looking at the metrics: the time that people spend on the site and on individual pages has gone up; patrons are spending more time *finding* what they want and looking *at* content, rather than looking *for* it.

"We can now sell gift certificates online and soon patrons will be able to see their ticket history so they know what their upcoming performances are. In the coming months, we will add social sign-in via Facebook and create guest checkout so you can buy a ticket without having to create an account."

LONG-TERM PLANS

Looking to the future, Bell sees a few milestones and tests ahead for him and his team. "A big one is making sure that all goes well when patrons start using the new system for their subscription renewals in January. In February, we move marketing, development, and education staff over from the Ivy Street offices to the new Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera in the Veterans Building next door; we have to have their network up and running. And in the longer term I want to get our production systems out of this building. Running your own data center in a building that was designed in 1932 is not ideal. There are companies who can do this for pennies on the dollar, with entire teams of security and server people. We are in the business of opera and shouldn't be dealing with hard drives and such." 🍷

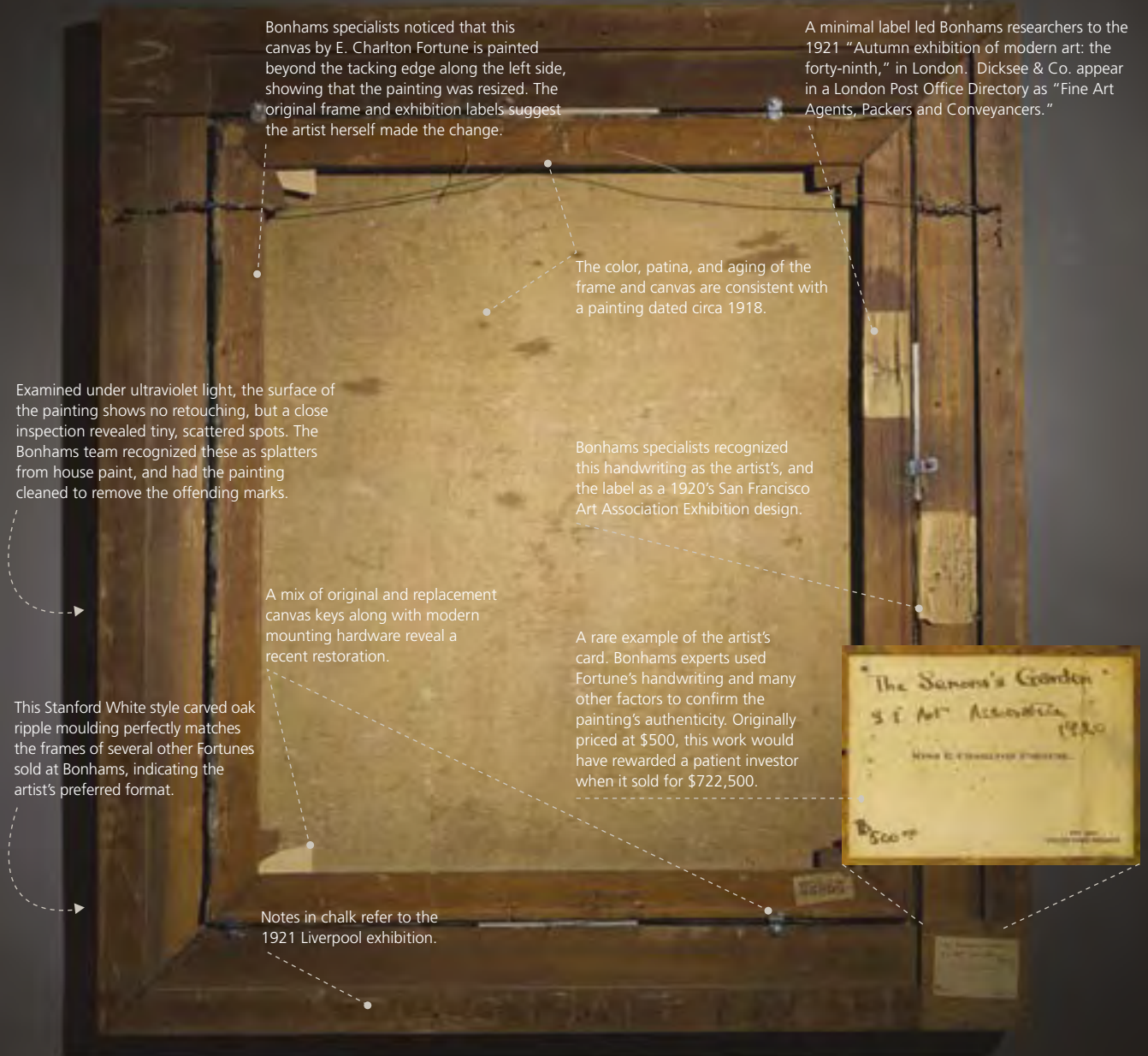
BY NIELS SWINKELS

Bonhams knows art...



Sold for \$722,500
E. Charlton Fortune
The Senora's Garden, circa 1918
oil on canvas

...back to front.



Bonhams specialists noticed that this canvas by E. Charlton Fortune is painted beyond the tacking edge along the left side, showing that the painting was resized. The original frame and exhibition labels suggest the artist herself made the change.

A minimal label led Bonhams researchers to the 1921 "Autumn exhibition of modern art: the forty-ninth," in London. Dicksee & Co. appear in a London Post Office Directory as "Fine Art Agents, Packers and Conveyancers."

The color, patina, and aging of the frame and canvas are consistent with a painting dated circa 1918.

Examined under ultraviolet light, the surface of the painting shows no retouching, but a close inspection revealed tiny, scattered spots. The Bonhams team recognized these as splatters from house paint, and had the painting cleaned to remove the offending marks.

Bonhams specialists recognized this handwriting as the artist's, and the label as a 1920's San Francisco Art Association Exhibition design.

A mix of original and replacement canvas keys along with modern mounting hardware reveal a recent restoration.

A rare example of the artist's card. Bonhams experts used Fortune's handwriting and many other factors to confirm the painting's authenticity. Originally priced at \$500, this work would have rewarded a patient investor when it sold for \$722,500.

This Stanford White style carved oak ripple moulding perfectly matches the frames of several other Fortunes sold at Bonhams, indicating the artist's preferred format.

Notes in chalk refer to the 1921 Liverpool exhibition.

We never judge a book by its cover, or a painting by its front side alone. By the time this E. Charlton Fortune reached the auction block, our experts knew it inside and out.

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Having already set the world record for a Fortune at auction, they built on their experience by studying the painting's scribbled notes, exhibition labels and materials.

At Bonhams, starting at the back of each painting keeps our results out in front.

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Founded in 1977 as the San Francisco Affiliate Artists Opera program, Adler Fellowships are two-year performance-oriented residencies for classical music's most promising young artists. Now in its 38th year, this internationally acclaimed training program has launched the careers of many of the artists working on and off stage this season. We are grateful to all of our Adler Sponsors for their support, received from August 1, 2014 through September 14, 2015. For more information on sponsorship opportunities and Adler events, please call (415) 565-3225.



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A Dream Come True

*Introducing San Francisco Opera's
Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera*

After six auspicious decades as the first home of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art—which boasted early shows by Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, Henri Matisse, and others—the fourth floor of the War Memorial Veterans Building sat for many years as a lonesome law library and then, most recently, dormant for a seismic retrofit. Its handsome galleries were abandoned, its skylights shuttered.

Enter San Francisco Opera (stage right, across the courtyard) with its cadre of architects, directors, and donors with a dream. And now, when visitors in hard hats step off the elevator on the fourth floor, they experience the exhilaration of a space in the middle of a stunning transformation. Instead of darkness, light floods in from refurbished glass ceilings, elegant columns that had been walled off now stand tall and gleaming, and abandoned SFMOMA galleries now await new installations of archival photography from the Opera, which has gutted and reinvented this space in the last two years.

And soon, music will ring through its hallways for the first time since it was built almost a century ago.

Welcome to the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera, named for Diane “Dede” Wilsey, who generously gave the project’s lead donation, and which, when opened, will boast 12,000 square feet of shared community performance/rehearsal space and education studio, as well as 16,000 square feet of public archives, galleries, administrative offices, and even a costume studio complete with dye vats.

The heart of the new complex, the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater, will be a high-tech, modular 299-seat venue—perfect for the Opera’s edgier and more family-friendly programming. Equipped with a state-of-the-art Constellation acoustic system by Meyer Sound, the Atrium Theater will also accommodate film screenings, lectures, panel discussions, business meetings, and receptions. Other important spaces within the center will include the John M. Bryan Education Studio, the Edward Paul Braby San Francisco Opera Archive, and the Norby Anderson Costume Studio. And downstairs in the basement, the Opera will have an additional 10,000-square-foot space for costume storage and fitting rooms.

For General Director David Gockley, the Wilsey Center for Opera is nothing short of a dream come true—if one born of absolute necessity.

“When I took this job ten years ago it became clear to me that we were strewn all over the city, from the Presidio to Dogpatch,” says Gockley in his Opera House office, where windows face the Veterans Building. “It would take twenty minutes just to drive to the Presidio to watch a rehearsal—and that was only one of seven locations! The lack of efficiency and the expense were staggering. Being that spread out made it very difficult to promote a sense of family. If you’re separated from the center, you tend to do your own thing and are not involved in problem solving.”

So the Company did a feasibility study to examine the possibility of “bumping out” the back of the Veterans Building to add more square footage, an idea that was eventually ruled out mainly due to the price tag: \$50–60 million. In addition, altering a historic structure in any way would require years of planning and hearings.

“Historic preservation is such a hot button issue in this town,” says Gockley. “We talked to virtually everyone at the Historic Preservation Board and they all had their own opinions.”

Then, in 2010, came a major breakthrough. “Elizabeth Murray, who is managing director of the War Memorial Performing Arts Center—essentially our landlord—said ‘David, would you be interested in the fourth floor of the Veterans Building?’ I said, ‘Absolutely!’”

Murray says the idea was hatched by the War Memorial Board of Trustees, for whom she works. “The Opera wanted to expand; they were all over the city,” she says. “And historically, the fourth floor was designated for arts and culture use. It was always the Board’s goal to restore it for that. So this was combining their needs with our needs, and it will result in a benefit for many groups who will be able to use the facility.”

“And,” she laughs, “they came up with the money for it! How much better a gift could this possibly be?”

Michael Simpson, San Francisco Opera’s Chief Financial Officer, says the figure that Murray quoted for the refurbishment was \$21 million—just a third of what it would have cost to do the bump-out. “It’s a tighter space than an annex would have been,” he says. “But it will allow for some wonderfully intimate programming, and the city is happy that we agreed to a six-month split of the two community spaces, which will allow other arts organizations to use them.”

Once an agreement was struck, the task became finding an architect with the professional skills to transform the historically significant structure into a state-of-the-art performance space. The choice, it seems, was near-unanimous.

An artist rendering of the Wilsey Center’s 299-seat Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater, which will accommodate performances, film screenings, lectures, panel discussions, business meetings, and receptions.



The fourth floor of the newly renovated War Memorial Veterans Building will house the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera, featuring performance and rehearsal space, an education center, archives, galleries, offices, and costume studio.

“I was recruited by several people involved from various angles. I was on several lists,” says architect Mark Cavagnero with a smile. “And I was thrilled that we were selected.”

Cavagnero is perhaps the pre-eminent Bay Area architect of both civic and arts institutional projects, including the new SFJAZZ Center, Oberlin Dance Collective’s dance company headquarters, the Legion of Honor, Brava Theater Center, Oakland Museum of California, and many more.

Once awarded the job, Cavagnero said he “just waded in and started trying to solve problems. Step one was working with engineers on different schemes to strengthen it. Then the question became how to best utilize the space for the Opera. The challenge was how to respect the space but completely reimagine it, how to repurpose it without destroying the character. For me, those are always really interesting projects.”

Of course, the other critical step in a project of this magnitude is securing funding, which began as soon as the ink was dry on the agreement with the City of San Francisco. Happily for the Opera, arts angel “Dede” Wilsey stepped forward with the lead gift of \$5 million, getting the \$22 million campaign off on the right foot.

“I have been the Opening Weekend sponsor of the Opera for many years, so when David Gockley approached me, I said ‘Yes,’” she says. “It’s both cost-saving and more time-efficient for the company to use space in the Veterans Building, rather than multiple Company locations around town.”

“Dede’s \$5 million gift set the tone,” says Simpson. Wilsey’s

gift was followed by generous donations from Dianne and Tad Taube, Leslie and George Hume, Susan Anderson-Norby and Doug Norby, and many more. “After a wide appeal for smaller donations, we found ourselves almost there,” says Simpson. “We’ve raised \$22 million, which includes \$1 million for the first year of programming.”

As fundraising continued, so did the overhaul of the fourth floor—a feat rendered easier, says Cavagnero, by the fact that a historic building’s interior is less challenging to alter than the exterior. “The interior is less monitored than the exterior. It’s not a problem for someone to tear down an interior wall.” And in doing so, they discovered some wonders, including four beautiful columns in the center of the floor which had been walled off years ago. “The MOMA started covering things up that they deemed a distraction from the art,” he explained.

Chief among the many challenges was the space that would become the Atrium Theater. “This room had everything going against it: terrible acoustics, inflexible floor plan,” says Cavagnero. “We also needed to create isolation between the theater and the Herbst auditorium below, so we had to add mass to the floor.”

They also had to cover the antiquated glass ceiling, which was in need of extensive repair anyway, in order to create lighting and sound for the theater. But when it’s complete, Gockley is convinced it will be a jewel of a venue.

“The theater is limited to 299 seats. A hundred more would have been great, but we’ll scale our programming and get cre-



Completion of the \$21 million refurbishment is scheduled for February 2016.

CORY WEAVER

CORY WEAVER

ative. You can sell out with 299 tickets and build the excitement. The possibilities for alternative programming are huge.”

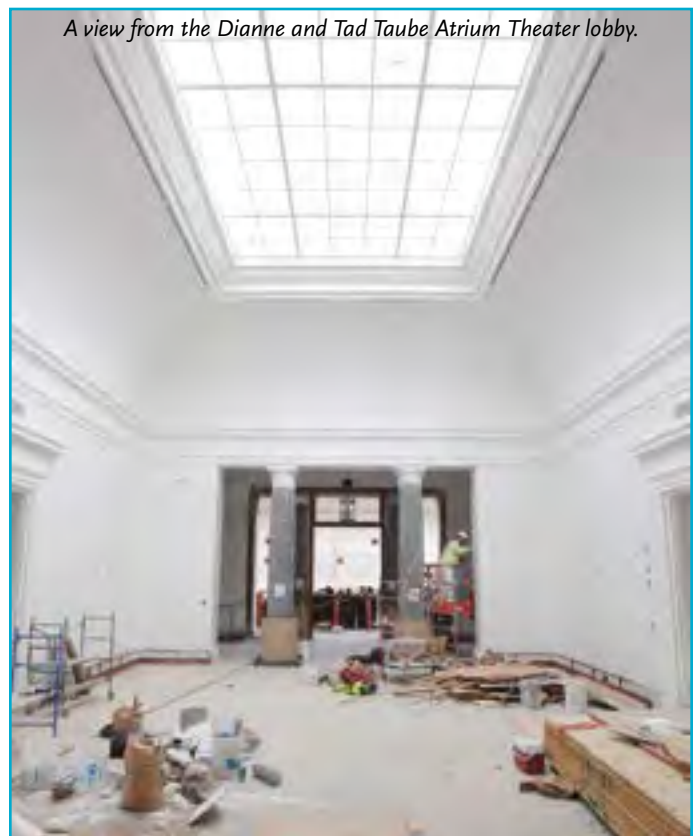
The other challenges included adding climate controls to the archive center—something the Opera has never had. “In Houston we started an archive and I thought we desperately need this here,” says Gockley. “I worked closely with Jon Finck on this.”

“It will have everything from programs and photos, to video, rare radio broadcasts, production renderings and costumes, and all available to the public,” says Finck, Director of Communications and Public Affairs for the Opera. “It will be led by a newly appointed director of archive and associate archivist and supported by a highly knowledgeable volunteer corps. Because this will be a public archive, there will be desks with computers for students, scholars, and other interested people to do research.”

Acoustics were also a major challenge in the raw space, and to solve the problems, project managers went for the gold standard: a Constellation acoustic system by Meyer Sound. “This sound system is famed,” says Gockley. “Constellation creates a totally dead room—like you’re surrounded by cotton—but then it amplifies it back to life with a hundred tiny microphones and speakers.”

But the Wilsey Center is far more than a theater, an archive, and an education center. It will also boast galleries of archival production photographs dating back to the 1920s, offices for 130 Opera staff, theater storage, displays of historic costumes, and, of course, the costume studio—complete with dye vats, sewing machines, and more.

Programming for the Wilsey Center’s first season in the Taube



A view from the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater lobby.

CORY WEAVER

Atrium Theater is already set—all under the moniker SF Opera Lab—and its new curator, Elkhannah Pulitzer, has been hired.

“The Center’s one directive is that each presentation needs to combine a theatrical as well as vocal performance aspect,” says Gockley. “There will be a Schubert song cycle with the very exciting German baritone Matthias Goerne and stunning visuals by William Kentridge, an *a cappella* opera for six women by Serbian-born Canadian composer Ana Sokolović, a live music presentation of the film *The Triplets of Belleville*, chamber music concerts with members of the Opera Orchestra and Adler Fellows, the Schwabacher Debut Recital Series, and finally *Voigt Lessons* with soprano Deborah Voigt, written by Terrence McNally.”

Gockley’s voice conveys the excitement he feels about the new stage. “We’ll be keeping the ticket prices low, which will allow us to offer intimate programming to a younger audience,” he says. “The audience will be looking for non-traditional material and a more casual experience. For example, the seats will have cup holders for one’s favorite beverage.”

The Center will begin to come to life in December, when the first

to move in are the costume studio, followed by staff in February.

“The wonderful thing about it is that it will give San Francisco Opera for the very first time year-round exposure,” says Finck.

Murray is equally enthusiastic from the city’s perspective. “This will be a marriage with lots and lots of mutual benefits,” she says.

For Wilsey, hopes are high that the center named after her will “stimulate interest in the opera in young people, and make it easily accessible to all. The arts are the basis for culture in a civilization, and it is important for each generation to be exposed to the art form.”

And for Gockley, who retires in July after a decade of leadership, it will become part of his legacy. “Creating this beautiful space is the best gift we can give the next generation,” he says. 🌟

Jane Ganahl has been a journalist, author, editor, and producer in San Francisco for more than three decades. She is the co-founder of Litquake, the West Coast’s largest independent literary festival, author of the memoir Naked on the Page, and contributor to many magazines, from Harper’s Bazaar to Rolling Stone, Ladies’ Home Journal, and San Francisco Opera Magazine.

2016 Taube Atrium Theater Programs

FEBRUARY 28–APRIL 20

Schwabacher Debut Recital Series

Presented by the San Francisco Opera Center and Merola Opera Program.

MARCH 11–13

Winterreise

Composed by Franz Schubert

Matthias Goerne, *baritone*

Markus Hinterhäuser, *piano*

William Kentridge, *stage direction and visual creation*

Schubert’s haunting song cycle is accompanied by images and film by South African artist William Kentridge.



APRIL 2–10

Svadba-Wedding

Composed by Ana Sokolović

This Serbian *a cappella* chamber opera for six female voices, directed by Michael Cavanagh, celebrates the eve of one woman’s wedding.

APRIL 14–23

The Triplets of Belleville Cine-Concert

Directed by Sylvain Chomet

Composed by Benoît Charest

Featuring Le Terrible Orchestra de Belleville
Screenings of the French Oscar-nominated film are accompanied by live performances of the soundtrack, performed by the composer, his band, and chanteuse.

APRIL 7 AND 20

Chamber Music Concerts

Featuring members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and the Adler Fellowship program.

MAY 6 AND 8

Voigt Lessons

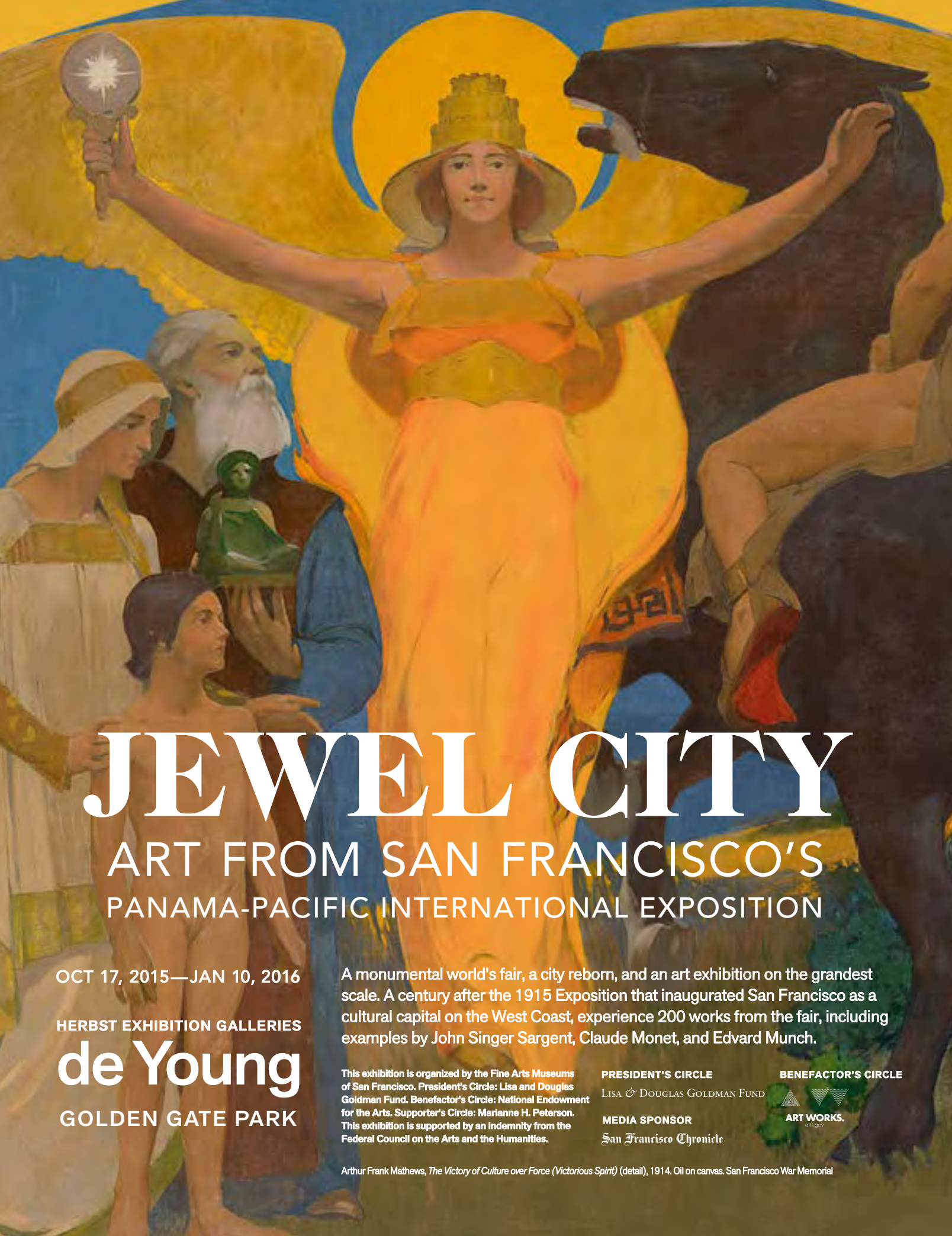
Deborah Voigt, *soprano*

Kevin Stites, *piano*

Deborah Voigt teams up with writer Terrence McNally to create an evening of stories, songs, and reflections on her life as a singer and performer.



Visit sfopera.com for programming details and ticket information.



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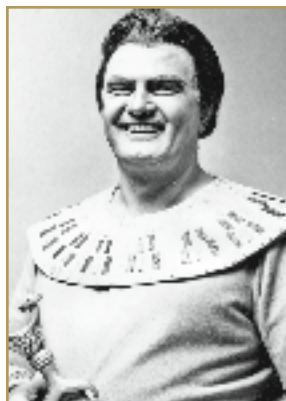
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Arthur Frank Mathews, *The Victory of Culture over Force (Victorious Spirit)* (detail), 1914. Oil on canvas. San Francisco War Memorial

IN MEMORIAM



JON VICKERS

Tenor

A mainstay at San Francisco Opera for almost two decades, Canadian-born heroic tenor Jon Vickers sang nine of his greatest—and most demanding—roles with the Company from 1959 to 1976. Siegmund, Aeneas, Peter Grimes, Florestan, Don José, Radamès, Canio, Don Carlo, and Sergei from Shostakovich's *Katerina Ismailova*: Vickers sang them all with searing vocal intensity and

unforgettable, dramatic interpretations. Born in 1926 in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, he was the sixth of eight children. Vickers' 1958 Bayreuth debut as Siegmund in *Die Walküre* launched one of his signature roles and an international career that took him to San Francisco Opera one year later singing Radamès opposite Leontyne Price's *Aida* for his War Memorial debut. Throughout his lifetime, Vickers was a recipient of many honors and awards and held seven honorary degrees, two Grammy awards, and in 1985, was named to the Academy of Vocal Arts Hall of Fame for Great American Singers. "Art is a wrestling with the meaning of life," Vickers once said. Since society no longer resists "the pull of success," it can no longer "define or draw a line between what's art and what's entertainment."



SANDRA BERNHARD

Stage director

Sandra Bernhard began at San Francisco Opera in 1990 as an assistant stage director on *Don Quichotte* and worked through the 2007–08 Season when she directed the *Samson et Dalila* that was the Company's first simulcast to AT&T Park and played in cinemas worldwide. Over the years, she had directed a number of operas, including

Ermione, *La Bohème*, *Daphne*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmen*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Tosca*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*. While with the Company she also developed an innovative educational program for children called "Opera Inside Out." After leaving San Francisco Opera, she became the inaugural director of HGOCO, Houston Grand Opera's education and community engagement division, where she commissioned many new works that addressed issues relevant to the local community. "She was a wonderfully energetic and talented leader in our field, both in her work on stage and in the communities in which she worked," says General Director David Gockley. "She leaves a great legacy in San Francisco, in Houston, and across the opera world."



ANDREW PORTER

Music writer and scholar

Perhaps best known for a two-decade-long tenure as *The New Yorker* music critic, Porter was an invaluable fixture in the opera world, including at San Francisco Opera where he wrote several commissioned program book

articles. Born in Cape Town, South Africa in 1928, Porter began his career as a critic in London with contributions to newspapers including the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*. Opera was a longstanding passion. In the early 1970s, Porter's scholarship unearthed the original, complete version of *Don Carlos* with Verdi's intended opening scene in the library of the Paris Opéra. He also created English translations of numerous operas, including works by Handel, Mozart (San Francisco Opera used his *Magic Flute* translation in 1980), Rossini, Haydn and, most notably, Wagner's entire *Ring* cycle. His versatility also extended to libretto writing. Porter wrote the libretto for Bright Sheng's *Song of Manjun* when Sheng was composer-in-residence at the San Francisco Symphony. He also penned the libretto for John Eaton's *The Tempest*. "Musicians delight in sharing their discoveries and enthusiasm," Porter wrote. "And one of the rewards of a music critic's life is being able to share delight with more than an immediate circle of acquaintances."



ROBERT CAHEN

Photographer

Legendary opera photographer Robert Cahen captured many of the great performances at San Francisco Opera during a career that spanned more than five decades. His interest in theatrical photography began in 1959 at Lyric Opera of Chicago when light color photography was first becoming available. Cahen moved to California in 1960 and in 1962

began his fifty-year collaboration with San Francisco Opera. Over the course of his lifetime, he photographed more than a 1,000 productions as well as stage portraits of the most renowned singers of our age, and created friendships with many of the great artists. In addition to his work with the Company, Cahen was a guest photographer at the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Vienna State Opera, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. His work has appeared in numerous publications and on more

We honor the members of San Francisco Opera that we lost this year

than 70 albums and recordings, as well as multiple book jacket portraits for Luciano Pavarotti and Plácido Domingo. A permanent gallery of Cahen's work is on display in the lower lounge of the War Memorial Opera House.



ELENA OBRAZTSOVA

Mezzo-soprano

Although famed Russian mezzo Elena Obraztsova was known as the “Jewel of the Bolshoi” and spent most of her career singing in the former Soviet Union, she performed during three different San Francisco Opera seasons: in 1975 as Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, in 1977 as Princess de Bouillon in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and in 1990 as the Principessa in *Suor Angelica*.

Born in 1939 in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), she survived the Nazi siege to pursue a career in voice. She joined the Bolshoi as a soloist in 1963 and, rare for a young singer during the height of the Cold War, was allowed to appear at other major opera houses, including triumphant performances at La Scala, Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera, and the Vienna State Opera. Obraztsova appeared in some 100 opera roles, including, to great acclaim, Amneris. “God gave us the strength to survive the blockade of Leningrad, and then he gave me talent as well,” she once said. “I never asked myself what I should be doing. I knew that I would be an opera singer. It’s all in me. And all of my life is like a gift from God.”



CARLO SCIBELLI

Tenor

The veteran of four San Francisco Opera productions, beginning with the 1996–97 Season, Carlo Scibelli was a much-admired Manrico who also performed at LA Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Covent Garden, and the Teatro Colon. He made his film debut performing the role of an opera singer in the 1996 Barbra Streisand

film *The Mirror Has Two Faces*. Scibelli's roles with San Francisco Opera included Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, the Second Jew in *Salome*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, and the Italian Tenor in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Scibelli tragically passed away in New York City a few days after his fiftieth birthday.



SUSAN WEBB

Assistant conductor and prompter

One of the bedrocks of the San Francisco Opera music staff for a generation, Susan Webb was in demand by many opera companies over a distinguished 35-year career. Her career as coach, rehearsal pianist, prompter, and assistant conductor began at the Santa Fe Opera before she accepted the invitation of Kurt Herbert Adler in 1971

to join the music staff of the San Francisco Opera. Her work continued here through the 1999 *Ring*, including serving as music director of the San Francisco Opera Center from 1996 to 1998. Two seasons with the Chicago Lyric Opera intervened and then James Levine invited her to join the music staff of the Metropolitan Opera. During the off-seasons, Webb worked for Opera Australia and for the Bayreuth Festival, and spent twelve summers in a cottage in Wales where she translated several opera libretti for the Metropolitan Opera Guild's series. Webb's devotion to high musical standards was regarded as unshakable. “She was such a force to be reckoned with in rehearsals,” warmly recalls director Francesca Zambello. “Susan was a truly amazing musician.”



DAVID LITTLEJOHN

Music writer and professor

An astute and eloquent program notes annotator for San Francisco Opera, David Littlejohn was also a beloved professor at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism for 35 years. Born in San Francisco in 1937, he attended Junipero Serra High in San Mateo before graduating in 1959 from UC Berkeley, where he

studied architecture. Music and opera, however, held a special place in his heart. Handicapped and confined to a wheelchair in recent decades due to a childhood diving accident, Littlejohn was nonetheless a tireless reviewer for San Francisco Opera, writing for *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Times* (UK), among other periodicals. “He was an amazing guy who really just had the will to push to get paid to do what he loved,” said his son Greg Littlejohn.

For more detailed information on these artists and their performances at San Francisco Opera, visit archive.sfopera.com.

GET “IN THE KNOW”

San Francisco Opera and its affiliates are pleased to offer a wealth of educational resources to help you get “in the know” for each opera performance. For information on these and other resources, visit sfopera.com/learn.

E-OPERA NEWSLETTER

San Francisco E-Opera subscribers are the first to know about the latest performances, special events, and educational opportunities. Keep up-to-date on featured artists, special ticket offers, advance program notes, and other insider information by signing up at sfopera.com/eopera.

INSIGHT PANELS

Renowned artists and personalities from the world of opera, including cast members and directors from the productions, share behind-the-scenes insights and experiences during informal panel discussions presented by San Francisco Opera Guild. Visit sfopera.com/insights.

OPERA PREVIEW LECTURES

San Francisco Opera Guild chapters present lectures that bring renowned musicologists to communities throughout the greater Bay Area, offering an in-depth look into the season’s upcoming operas. Visit sfopera.com/previews.

OVERTURE: OPERA WORKSHOPS FOR ADULTS

San Francisco Opera hosts a series of interactive workshops for adults about the journey of creating opera. Newcomers and seasoned opera-goers learn the process from the ground up and experience San Francisco Opera behind-the-scenes. Visit sfopera.com/adult.

FAMILY PROGRAMS

San Francisco Opera offers family programs, including movie screenings and interactive workshops, throughout the year. Visit sfopera.com/family.

CHECK OUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA’S BLOG

Our blog, *Backstage at San Francisco Opera*, offers unique insight into the Company, with entries from the principal singers, chorus, and orchestra musicians to the creative teams for each opera and the many talented people who don’t take a bow on stage. Visit sfopera.com/blog.

OPERA HOUSE TOURS

Discover the magic that goes into creating an opera production with a backstage tour of the War Memorial Opera House led by a Guild volunteer docent. Tours occur only on selected dates in small groups; reservations required. E-mail tour.reserve@gmail.com or call the San Francisco Opera Guild at (415) 551-6353 to leave a message. For group tours contact Lynn Watson at sf.opera.tours@gmail.com. \$20 for general admission.

OPERA TALKS

Before every performance, charismatic scholars present a 25-minute overview of the opera, with insights on the music, composer, and historical background. Talks begin 55 minutes prior to curtain. Visit sfopera.com/operatalks.

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg: Peter Susskind

Il Barbiere di Siviglia: Bruce Lamott

The Fall of the House of Usher: Samuel Otter

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DREW ALITZER



Wilsey Center for Opera

San Francisco Opera recognizes with gratitude the donors listed below who have contributed to help us successfully raise \$22 million to fully fund the construction of the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera. Thank You!

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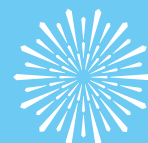
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SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn



Once again, the unprecedented generosity of Cynthia and John Gunn has set the stage for a dazzling season at San Francisco Opera. Since 2002, when John joined the Opera Board, the couple has underwritten numerous productions and provided exceptional support for many of the Company's innovative endeavors.

In September 2008, the Gunns made a historic commitment—believed to be the largest gift ever made by individuals to an American opera company—to help fund the signature projects of General Director David Gockley, including new operas and productions, multimedia projects, and outreach programs. This season, the Gunns' inspired generosity is helping make possible four productions—*Sweeney Todd*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Carmen*, and *Don Carlo*.

John shared his considerable insights at the 2014 conference of OPERA America, the national service organization for opera. As he told attendees, "Opera is a dynamic art form and all of us play a role in keeping it vital. We must expand our repertoire and our audiences, and strive for financial flexibility. And we depend on donors to keep opera alive."

John is the former chairman and CEO of Dodge & Cox

Investment Managers. He joined the firm in 1972, the year he received his MBA from Stanford Business School and married Cynthia, who graduated from Stanford with an A.B. in political science in 1970. Early in her career, Cynthia was the editor and director of The Portable Stanford book series for ten years. She edited twenty-eight books by Stanford professors on a vast array of topics, including *Economic Policy Beyond the Headlines* by George Shultz and Ken Dam.

In addition to their support of San Francisco Opera, the Gunns are active members of the community. John is the chair of the advisory board for the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR), serves as a trustee of Stanford University, and is Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Stanford Hospital Care. Cynthia is an overseer of Stanford's Hoover Institution, a member of the advisory board of Family and Children Services, and serves on the boards of the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health and the San Francisco Fine Arts Museums.

Opera lovers are grateful to Cynthia and John, and applaud their commitment to keeping San Francisco Opera a leading-edge company.



(Left to right): Alireza Atri, M.D., Ph.D. and Catherine Madison, M.D. of the Ray Dolby Brain Health Center at CPMC

Innovating Care for Dementia

The Ray Dolby Brain Health Center at CPMC

Under the direction of **Catherine Madison, M.D.** the Ray Dolby Brain Health Center at CPMC has helped hundreds of local families deal with not only the challenges of medical care, but also the stress and practical considerations of an Alzheimer's diagnosis. Now, in a move toward developing innovative new treatments for dementia, the center has hired **Alireza Atri, M.D., Ph.D.**, formerly of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School to hold the Ray Dolby Endowed Chair in Brain Health Research. "I believe with perseverance we can significantly lessen the health and social impact of dementia," says Dr. Atri. The center was launched by a generous philanthropic investment from **Dagmar Dolby** and her family.

To learn more about how you can help provide this exceptional care to even more people, please visit cpmc.org/giving.



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Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem

As Jan Shrem explains, “For Maria, it is all about the artists. Though I had loved opera for years before I met her, it was Maria who opened my eyes to the dedication and sacrifice of the artists.” With the renewal of another magnificent three-year commitment, Jan and Maria have expanded their support of opera artists through the establishment of two new funds in addition to the *Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund*. The *Conductors Fund* will help ensure the continued appearances of Maestro Nicola Luisotti and other Italian conductors, and the *Emerging Stars Fund* will help bring rising young talents to the stage.

Maria, born in Florence, Italy, says, “Opera has been one of my greatest passions since I was 13 years old.” When she saw *Madama Butterfly* at San Francisco Opera starring Renata Scotto in 1974, they had an emotional backstage meeting. “She was so far from home and so grateful to be able to speak Italian with me – we both cried. I began to understand the challenging life of opera artists. Since then, I have been motivated to do what I can to welcome artists when they are working in San Francisco.” Jan concurs, “They dedicate their lives for our pleasure, and their artistry elevates our lives.”

The *Emerging Stars* of San Francisco Opera’s 2015–16 season include virtuoso singers like Brian Mulligan, Nadine Sierra, Heidi Stober, Michael Fabiano and more. In addition to supporting their appearances, Maria and Jan are sponsoring the *Emerging Star of the Year* competition for a \$10,000 prize. What does it take to be an *Emerging Star*? In the Shrems’ view, a beautiful voice, a good ear, strong acting skills, and the ability to perform from the heart. At the end of the 2015–16 season, one artist will be selected for his or her superlative season performance by a jury including the Opera’s General Director, the Director of Artistic and Music Planning, and Jan and Maria. In addition, audience members will be invited to vote for their favorite *Emerging Star of the Year* online. Artist and competition information will be provided on the Opera’s website throughout the season.

David Gockley states, “San Francisco Opera has always taken pride in being able to spot young performers on the rise with our Adler and Merola programs, and now with the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem *Emerging Star of the Year Award*, we will be recognizing artists on the threshold of stardom. We are so grateful for Jan and Maria’s generosity and their innovative approach to philanthropy.”

“It is immensely satisfying to support San Francisco Opera in this way. We can appreciate the benefits of our philanthropy here and now as we enjoy these young, exciting artists and become their friends.” Maria feels that artists want “friends” in the audience and she and Jan are pleased to know that their presence gives artists greater confidence. “We hope others will join us in contributing to these funds and these friendships.”

Jan says, “Opera is what brought us together, and it will always be central to our lives. It is a joy to share in Maria’s overwhelming enthusiasm. And it is important to ensure that San Francisco Opera has the support and stability it deserves to continue its transformative work.”



DREW ALTIZER



DREW ALTIZER

Top: Maria Manetti Shrem and Jan Shrem at the 2015 Opera Ball.

Bottom: Michael Fabiano and Maria Manetti Shrem at the 2015 Opera Ball.

2015–2016 REPERTORY

LUISA MILLER

Giuseppe Verdi

September 11, 16, 19, 22, 25, 27

Production made possible, in part, by

Diane B. Wilsey, Koret Foundation, Dianne & Tad Taube

SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET

Stephen Sondheim

Company Premiere

September 12, 15, 18, 20, 23, 26, 29

Production made possible, in part, by

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn, Roberta & David Elliott, Meyer Sound,
The National Endowment for the Arts

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

Gaetano Donizetti

October 8, 11, 13, 16, 21, 24, 28

Production made possible, in part, by

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn, Keith & Priscilla Geeslin,
Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem

THE MAGIC FLUTE

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

October 20, 25, 27, 29; November 4, 8, 12, 14, 17, 20

Production made possible, in part, by

San Francisco Opera Guild, Chevron, United Airlines,
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DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG

Richard Wagner

November 18, 21, 24, 27; December 2, 6

Production made possible, in part, by

The Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson Fund,
The Bernard Osher Endowment Fund,
Dr. & Mrs. William M. Coughran

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

Gioachino Rossini

November 25, 29; December 1, 5, 9



THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

(A Double Bill)

Usher House • Gordon Getty

La Chute de la Maison Usher • Claude Debussy

U.S. Premiere of Double Bill

December 8, 10, 11, 13

Production made possible by Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem

CARMEN

Georges Bizet

May 27, 28, 29, 31; June 1, 17, 23, 26, 30; July 2, 3

Production made possible by John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn

DON CARLO

Giuseppe Verdi

June 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 29

Production made possible, in part, by John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn,
Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, Leslie & George Hume,
Thomas* & Barbara Wolfe, Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem

JENŮFA

Leoš Janáček

June 14, 19, 22, 25, 28; July 1

Production made possible, in part, by

The Bernard Osher Endowment Fund, Koret Foundation,
Dianne & Tad Taube, The Thomas Tilton Production Fund

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Dianne & Tad Taube, Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment Funds, Diane B. Wilsey

The season is also made possible by

The Great Singers Fund, established by Joan & David Traitel

The Conductors Fund, The Emerging Stars Fund, &

The Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund,

all established by Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem

* deceased

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SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

DREW ALTIZER



Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson Fund

(Production Sponsor, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*)

Libby and Burgess Jamieson have made an extraordinary commitment to San Francisco Opera through the years by supporting traditional, classic productions. Their special enthusiasm for the works of Puccini has assured a regular place on the War Memorial Opera House stage for recent memorable productions of *Il Trittico*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*, *Tosca*, and *La Bohème*. About this season's production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Burgess observes that Puccini and Wagner present interesting musical contrasts. "While Puccini is a leading exponent of the Italian romantic school, Wagner has greatly contributed to the preservation of the traditional northern European folklore in his works," he says. "*Die Meistersinger* brings a beautiful story out of native German folklore to

the operatic stage. Libby and I are pleased to know this production will charm San Francisco audiences this fall season."

With 40 years of experience in private and public investment management, Burgess is active on San Francisco Opera's Board of Directors and its investment committee.

Bernard and Barbro Osher (Production Sponsor, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*)

A native of Maine, Bernard Osher became involved with San Francisco Opera as a subscriber nearly fifty years ago, shortly after moving here from New York. He and his wife Barbro, a native of Sweden, have been outstanding benefactors of Bay Area cultural programs ever since. Their generosity has touched every aspect of the Company's work, from artist appearances to production facilities. In 1977, Bernard established the Bernard Osher Foundation, which supports higher education and the arts, locally and nationally. The Foundation has funded virtually every major arts organization in the area, including special youth programs. Higher education initiatives include community college support, *Lifelong Learning Institutes* on 119 campuses nationwide, and *Osher Centers for Integrative Medicine* at UCSF, Harvard Medical School, Vanderbilt and Northwestern Universities, and, in partnership with Barbro's *Pro Suecica Foundation*, at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden. Bernard is a longstanding member of San Francisco Opera's Board of Directors, serving on the Chairman's Council. Barbro is Honorary Consul General of Sweden in San Francisco, and serves as Chairman of the Board of the Osher Foundation.



RAY "SCOTTY" MORRIS

DREW ALTIZER



Joan and David Traitel/Great Singers Fund

(Sponsor, James Rutherford in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*)

"Without great singers, opera is not all it could be," says San Francisco Opera board member Joan Traitel. "That's why my husband and I approached David Gockley with the idea of creating a special way of supporting singers exclusively." The result was the Great Singers Fund, inaugurated by the Traitels in 2008 to provide San Francisco Opera with enhanced support to attract the world's best singers. Joan, a member of the Opera's board of directors since 1998, and her husband David were production sponsors for several years before founding the Great Singers Fund. "The Fund makes a difference in the quality of opera in San Francisco," Joan explains. When asked to name a favorite artist in the 2015-16 Season, Joan explains, "There are so many! James

Rutherford is internationally recognized as one of the most prominent Wagnerian singers of our day. We are so pleased that the Fund can enable his appearance. I hope people see the relationship between the Great Singers Fund and this season's fantastic lineup. Your support truly can make a difference! These amazing artists make an evening special, and at the end you walk away happy."

Susan Anderson-Norby & Doug Norby

“A super gift from a *super**!” That is the way Doug Norby refers to his and Susan’s decision to sponsor the move and renovation of the Opera’s costume studio from its South of Market location on Ninth Street to the new Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera. It all began in 1980 when Susan’s ballet teacher encouraged her to audition as a supernumerary. “I didn’t really know what that meant, and I was the only one who showed up to the auditions wearing a leotard! They hired me anyway.” She has been a *super* ever since, through thirty-five seasons and five general directors. “I don’t know why I keep coming back,” she says with refreshing directness. “It’s a lot of time and work. But I enjoy the process, the collaboration. And I love the costumes!”

Susan was intrigued when she first learned of the plans to consolidate many of the Opera’s functions onto the War Memorial campus. Shortly after, while getting ready for the final dress rehearsal of *Dolores Claiborne*, it was discovered that her costume’s jacket had accidentally been left at Ninth Street. Without time to retrieve it, she and the show went on. However, this incident and the years of costume fittings at the inconvenient location got her excited about the prospect of the move to the Wilsey Center. Her experience with the artisans of the costume shop also motivated her to consider helping with the new costume studio. “I’ve always had enormous respect for the entire costume team. The talent is amazing and it’s called ‘building costumes’ for good reason. They can make any body type into something completely different like giving a waistline to someone without one. The detail and quality is kept at the highest level. Imagine a costume that has to fit three sizes with three rows of hooks!” As Costume Director Daniele McCartan says, “It will be an honor for me and my team to move into the new Norby Anderson Costume Studio. We are all touched by Susan and Doug’s meaningful and generous gift.”

“I didn’t really know opera before I met Susan. I started to go because of her,” Doug notes. “At first, I used to ask, ‘Can we leave before the last act?’ But I don’t ask that anymore. I’ve become a fan.” Doug gets a kick out of the many stories Susan tells of her times on stage. In *Susannah*, Susan opened the show as the aged Susannah holding a shotgun. “I was back to back with Patricia Racette who gave me a bump with her derriere to begin our twirl. Instead of the usual music cue, I guess you could call it a ‘butt cue!’”

Their commitment to the Opera has been demonstrated in many ways. Susan has donated her hair for wigs. Among Doug’s career achievements, he is widely credited with guiding Lucasfilm through an especially challenging period during his tenure as president. With his experience, he has provided advice on the Opera’s new media projects. Recently Susan joined the San Francisco Opera Board of Directors.

As Doug explains, “San Francisco Opera is the jewel in the City’s crown. No one else is bigger or bolder.” As for maintaining support in difficult times, Doug recounts a WWII story. England’s finance minister said the nation should cut arts funding to support the war effort, to which Prime Minister Winston Churchill responded, “Then what are we fighting for?”

“It is our honor and pleasure to support San Francisco Opera and to help give the costume team a beautiful new home at the Wilsey Center for Opera.”

**Super*: Short for supernumerary, an on-stage extra affectionately called a “spear carrier.”



MICHAEL HARVEY



MICHAEL HARVEY

Top: Doug Norby & Susan Anderson-Norby

Bottom: Susan in her supernumerary costume for Tosca

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Richard Wagner

DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

David Gockley, General Director

Nicola Luisotti, Music Director
Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair

This production is made possible, in part, by the Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson Fund, the Bernard Osher Endowment Fund, and Dr. & Mrs. William M. Coughran.

Ms. Cooke's and Mr. Shrader's appearances are made possible by the Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem Emerging Stars Fund.

Mr. Rutherford's appearance is made possible by a gift to the Great Singers Fund from Joan & David Traitel.

Additional support is provided by Affiliate Sponsors Helen Berggruen, Jerome L. & Thao N. Dodson, Anne & Timothy Kahn, Mr. & Mrs. Burton J. McMurtry, Betty & Jack Schafer, Dianne & Tad Taube, Ms. Christina & Dr. Elizabeth DeBruin Warren, and an anonymous donor.



DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG

ACT I

Walther von Stolzing, an impoverished Franconian knight, has come to Nuremberg to dispose of his lands with the aid of Veit Pogner, the wealthy goldsmith. Having fallen in love with Pogner's daughter Eva, Walther has followed her to church. There he learns from Eva's companion Magdalene that Eva is betrothed to whoever wins the Mastersinging contest at tomorrow's festival. As apprentices set up for the Guild's meeting, David, Magdalene's suitor and the cobbler Hans Sachs' apprentice, explains the rules of Mastersong. He warns that, should Walther sing to the Masters today, he will face the Marker, who will allow only seven faults before disqualification. Walther decides to trust to the inspiration of love and ignore the rules.

As the meeting commences in the church, Pogner introduces Walther as a candidate for the Guild. The Masters let him sing, with Beckmesser—who is also in love with Eva—in the Marker's box. The improvised love song is greeted with incomprehension by the Masters and noisily interrupted by Beckmesser's scoring. A quarrel erupts when Sachs suggests that Beckmesser may have personal motives for destroying Walther's chances. As Walther rushes away, the Masters leave in confusion and Sachs is left alone, contemplating the strange new song he has just heard.

ACT II

The apprentices prepare for tomorrow's festivities. Learning from Magdalene that Walther has not been admitted to the Guild, Eva decides to speak with Sachs. Sachs vows to do all he can to help the lovers.

When Eva discovers that Beckmesser intends to serenade her that night, she proposes that Magdalene appear in her place. Walther persuades Eva to elope with him. Having overheard the lovers, Sachs decides to find another solution to the dilemma.

Eva hides with Walther just as Beckmesser arrives. Beckmesser's serenade is interrupted as Sachs starts singing and "marking" the song with his hammer. When David comes to his window and sees Magdalene wooed by an unknown man, he jumps down into the street and attacks. Soon the townspeople are awake and a riot breaks out. Sachs pushes Stolzing into his house as Pogner rescues Eva. The watchman finds the street empty, save for Beckmesser, who stumbles away.

ACT III

SCENE 1. Sachs broods on last night's events. He resolves to turn the madness engulfing his community to a greater purpose. Walther has awakened and enters, rapt with the memory of a wonderful dream. Walther begins to create a song praising Eva and Sachs commits it to paper, but the third verse eludes him. Sachs nonetheless urges him to prepare for the festival and a wedding, and the two of them leave the room.

Beckmesser arrives to confront Sachs but finds only an empty workshop. Seeing Walther's manuscript in Sachs' handwriting, Beckmesser pockets the piece of paper. His own song has been sung out last night, but with a new piece by Sachs to perform, his chances now look excellent.

Eva arrives, complaining about the new shoes Sachs made for her. He knows that this is a pretext to see Walther, and when the knight enters, he and Eva gaze rapturously at each other. Walther finds the inspiration for his third verse and Eva, overcome by the beauty of his words, falls weeping into Sachs' arms. He reacts brusquely, berating his pointless, empty life. Realizing how Sachs has always loved her, Eva begs to be forgiven. Resigned, Sachs masters his emotion. As David and Magdalene enter, he frees David from his indenture and asks all to bear witness to the baptism of Walther's new song.

SCENE 2. The people have gathered on the banks of the Pegnitz River to celebrate St. John's Day. The whole town welcomes the Masters. After the competition is declared open, Beckmesser—apparently the only candidate—takes his position and begins to sing. He has failed to comprehend Walther's words, badly fitting them to his own melody. Furiously, he confesses that the song is Sachs' composition, not his own. Sachs denies writing so beautiful a song and tells everyone that if they heard it correctly performed, they would share in his estimation. When he calls for a witness to validate his claim, Walther steps forward and is allowed to sing again. His song is heard by an enraptured crowd. Eva crowns him with laurels, and Sachs welcomes him among the Mastersingers.

First performance: Munich, Königliches Hof- und Nationaltheater; June 21, 1868

First performance in the U.S.: New York City; January 4, 1886

First San Francisco Opera performance: September 28, 1931

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg has been performed in 12 previous seasons at San Francisco Opera. For a complete record of all past *Meistersinger* casts, please visit archive.sfopera.com.

Personnel: 17 principals, 90 choristers, 12 dancers/fighters, 19 supernumeraries; **138 total**

Orchestra: 2 flutes, 1 piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons; 6 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 tuba; 1 timpanist, 2 percussionists; 1 harp; 50 strings; **76 total**

Backstage: Organ, 6 trumpets, 4 snare drums, 2 horns, Stierhorn (trombone); **14 total**

Conductor
Sir Mark Elder*

Production
Sir David McVicar

Revival Co-Directors
Marie Lambert*
Ian Rutherford*

Production Designer
Vicki Mortimer*

Lighting Designer
Paule Constable*

Associate Lighting Designer
Jeremy Turnbull*

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Choreography
Andrew George*

Revival Choreographer
Colm Seery*

Assistant Conductor
Joseph Marcheso

Music Staff
Bryndon Hassman, In Sun Suh,
Maureen Zoltek, Fabrizio Corona

Prompter
Dennis Doubin

Supertitles
Ian Julier

Assistant Directors
Shawna Lucey
E. Reed Fisher

Stage Manager
Darin Burnett

Dance Master
Lawrence Pech

Fight Director
Dave Maier

Costume Supervisor
Kristi Johnson

Wig and Makeup
Jeanna Parham

San Francisco Opera co-production
with Lyric Opera of Chicago and
Glyndebourne Festival Opera

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2015 AT 6 PM

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21 AT 6 PM

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24 AT 6 PM

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27 AT 6 PM

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2 AT 6 PM

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6 AT 1 PM

Opera in three acts by **Richard Wagner**
Libretto by the composer

DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG

(Sung in German with English supertitles)

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Eva	Rachel Willis-Sørensen*
Magdalene	Sasha Cooke
Balthasar Zorn	Joel Sorensen
Ulrich Eisslinger	Joseph Hu*
Hermann Ortel	Edward Nelson†
Konrad Nachtigall	Sam Handley*
Walther von Stolzing	Brandon Jovanovich
David	Alek Shrader
Sixtus Beckmesser	Martin Gantner*
Veit Pogner	Ain Anger*
Kunz Vogelgesang	AJ Glueckert
Fritz Kothner	Philip Horst
Hans Foltz	Matthew Stump†
Hans Schwarz	Anthony Reed†
Augustin Moser	Corey Bix
Hans Sachs	James Rutherford
An Apprentice	Laurel Porter
A Night Watchman	Andrea Silvestrelli

Guild members, journeymen, apprentices, and townspeople.

A full listing of Lehrbuben (Apprentices) is at the end of the Artist Profiles.

*San Francisco Opera debut †Current Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: Early nineteenth-century Nuremberg

ACT I

St. Catherine's Church, the eve of the Feast of St. John

—INTERMISSION—

ACT II

A street, later that same day

—INTERMISSION—

ACT III

SCENE 1: Sachs' workshop, next morning

SCENE 2: A meadow outside Nuremberg, later that day

*Latecomers will not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed.
Patrons who leave during the performance will not be re-seated until the next intermission.
The use of cameras, cellular phones and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden.
Please turn off and refrain from using all electronic devices.
The performance will last approximately five hours, thirty minutes.*

Director's Note

Sir David McVicar's production of Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg premiered at Glyndebourne Festival Opera in the summer of 2011. Two years later the production arrived at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Ahead of its performances there, McVicar spoke about Wagner's opera with Lyric Opera dramaturg Roger Pines.



What's the most intimidating thing about Meistersinger?

It's just so long, and so challenging. Act Three is as long as Acts One and Two put together, which is quite a daunting prospect. I had in mind at Glyndebourne that we had to keep lots of energy in reserve. I remember the day we started Act Three: I said to the cast and conductor, "Here we go, Act Three—no pressure, guys," and we just launched into it.

What is the piece really about?

Art, love, the passage of time, mortality. It's also an opera about nationhood.

The shift in period that you've made is instrumental in presenting that whole idea.

It was a very open, outgoing view of the world, and it felt very attractive: the early 1800s, the Germany that Wagner was born into. For the Germans, nationalism at that point in history was about liberal principles. This was the period of the German Confederation, the first attempt at any kind of political unification of the German states immediately following the Napoleonic Wars. The French had run amok over Germany, exploiting the fact that this country wasn't together in any political sense. One outcome of the Congress of Vienna (a summit of allies, held following Napoleon's ultimate defeat at Waterloo and final incarceration) was the first attempt to identify all those disparate German-speaking peoples as one nation, one people, with one sensibility. They knew that they could be united by art. It was a cultural identity and increasingly important to them. This was very important to Wagner as a young man growing up—his sense of nationhood was linked up with his sense of being an artist. *Meistersinger* is partly about that, and it's not in itself a negative thing.

The idea of community, too, is essential here.

Ultimately the opera says that community matters, and that *art* matters to the community. That's a very relevant message for our present western world, where the arts are so undervalued and dumbed down. Here is a community that nurtures and cares for art, and believes that great art has something profound to say to people. For me, that is the overwhelmingly positive message of *Meistersinger*.

How did you create this community onstage?

By accessing the personalities of the individual singers. No one was asked to play something very far from themselves. Improvising and experimenting, everyone had to be encouraged to build relationships with each other.

In discussions of this piece, the text so often is neglected, when it has so much to offer.

Although it's a verse text, it's flush with recognizable psychological

insight. Look at how characters are drawn, and how each one has an individual voice. It's also very charming. For once we're not dealing with heroes or gods; we're dealing with flesh-and-blood burghers. They have a completely different language from Brünnhilde or Wotan or Tristan. The German in *Meistersinger* is much more accessible, much pithier.

Anyone who is used to the other major Wagner operas will probably be somewhat astonished by the piece's comic element.

It's important to find Wagner's funny side, rather than taking him too solemnly. We mustn't think of him as stern German moralist—he was a Leipzig urchin to the end of his days. He loved pranks and practical jokes, extremes of joy, and he climbed trees when in his sixties. He was impossible, a monster, but with a wonderful sense of humor.

It's great that your production rejects the caricatured way Beckmesser has so often been portrayed.

You can hear it on early recordings. Maybe it was true to Wagner's intentions, but that's an intention I don't intend to let loose onstage! He's not someone who should be expelled from the community. With all his faults, petty jealousies, and small-mindedness, this is still a human being. I see no reason why he should be ridiculous as a candidate for Eva. We play him as a well-dressed man of means, with dignity of bearing. It makes him funnier—this vain man with fantastic dyed hair he's so vain about, exquisite clothes, undergoing the humiliations of Act Two.

The end of that act and the beginning of the final scene are pretty complicated logistically. Is there a secret to making all that activity happen effectively?

Yes—following the score! You take the time to analyze the vocal lines, which dictate how you do the riot in the Act Two finale. Wagner has given you everything! In ensembles of any opera, I look closely at vocal lines: who has the important ones, what does the composer want to hear, what suits the moment. That helps me work out who needs to be where onstage.

Your final scene makes important use of choreography, which most Meistersinger productions don't.

Nothing is more hideous to me than when you get to the Ländler and on come the dancing girls, with the chorus just standing there watching. The choreography shouldn't be too sophisticated—you should feel almost anyone could do it. At Glyndebourne every cast member, chorister, real ballet dancer, and supernumerary took part. Once you do that, the whole thing brims with joy and becomes a true expression of that music. This is the community dancing, with every single burgher in Nuremberg letting their hair down in whatever way they can. 🍷



Beyond the Revolution

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Richard Wagner was among those fired up by the fervor and idealism of the mid-nineteenth century revolutionary mindset sweeping Europe. He had tried to jumpstart radical change in the aftermath of the failed Dresden uprising of 1849 (in which he had actively taken part). After a period spent rechanneling that energy from poetics into art with his new *Ring* project, Wagner eventually came to recognize the necessity of more gradual transformation.

This dawning acceptance, in fact, helps account for Wagner's sudden renewal of interest in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in 1861, a topic he had initially pondered sixteen years before.

In March 1861 Wagner was forced to prematurely withdraw the production of his substantially revised *Tannhäuser* for Paris, which he had hoped would finally earn him respect in Europe's operatic capital at the time. (The composer's resentment was intensified by the fact that he had left Paris in defeat nearly twenty years before.) And that was only the latest in a series of humiliating public as well as personal setbacks. Plans to stage *Tristan und Isolde*, Wagner's most recent work—the score of which he had finished in 1859—were facing roadblocks. That premiere, scheduled for Vienna, would be subject to frustrating delays and eventually canceled. (*Tristan* finally saw the stage in Munich in 1865.)

And since the *Ring* had yet to be completed (let alone any of it performed), the most recent complete Wagner opera that the public had heard was *Lohengrin* from 1848. Indeed, the Viennese production of the latter in May 1861 afforded the composer a rare triumph. It also happened to give Wagner his first chance to hear the entire score of *Lohengrin* performed, since he had been a political exile from German lands by the time of that opera's world premiere in 1850 in Weimar, and (aside from distant Riga) *Lohengrin* had yet to be produced in a foreign city. Only recently had partial amnesty been granted—an experience that substantially contributed to the inspiration to write *Die Meistersinger*. (Wagner would remain an outlaw in the Kingdom of Saxony until 1862.)

With no forthcoming productions in the immediate future of the works that represented his revolutionary new brand of music drama, and facing an ever-growing abyss of debt, Wagner was desperate to create something “practical”—something that would be a success with the public, earn money, and also keep his name relevant. So in October 1861 he promised the publisher Franz Schott that he would wrap up a new score “by next winter.” Wagner added that “the style of the piece,

From the 1931 San Francisco Opera production of Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg—Richard Wagner's only mature comedy—a candid moment from the apprentices (or Lehrbuben). / LAWRENCE B. MORTON



Left: The beginning of the Act III quintet “Selig, wie die Sonne” from Wagner’s autographed score of *Die Meistersinger*. From initial inspiration to its first performance in 1868, the opera took approximately 22 years to complete.

in the poem and the music alike, will be thoroughly light and popular.”

This was not the first time Wagner pitched a project as an easy-to-produce potential hit guaranteed to get the cash happily flowing. He described *Tristan und Isolde* in similar terms when he decided to put aside the *Ring* in 1857 with *Siegfried* only partially composed. As mentioned, *Tristan*’s world premiere would not be realized until 1865.

And it would take Wagner until 1867 to finish *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*’s score. The “light and popular” piece had been injected with Wagnerian steroids, mushrooming well beyond the modest dimensions he imagined when he first conceived the work in 1845. This development repeated the pattern of an expanding universe manifested by the *Ring* cycle, which had started off as a single-cell organism, so to speak, that, through a sort of artistic meiosis, split off to become four operas.

What was the initial spark behind this process back in 1845, when Wagner was enjoying the most securely “bourgeois” position of his entire career as assistant music director of the court opera in Dresden? In the summer of that year, freshly exhausted from completing the score of *Tannhäuser*—his brand-new opera scheduled to be premiered that fall—and with the season over, the composer was taking a much needed vacation. For Wagner this meant immersing himself in the poetry of Wolfram von Eschenbach and other medieval material, which planted the seeds for *Lohengrin* and *Meistersinger* (and, eventually, for *Parsifal*).

With *Tannhäuser* still reverberating in his mind, Wagner read the literary historian Georg Gottfried Gervinus’ work on German poetry and became intrigued by the real-life figure of the shoemaker-poet-playwright Hans Sachs (1494–1576), a contemporary of Martin Luther and a leading member of the civic organization of “master singers” in Renaissance Nuremberg. Immediately Wagner was drawn to the potential of another work involving a song contest: this time as a lighter counterpart to the grand tragedy of *Tannhäuser* that would juxtapose the later middle-class master singers with the medieval minnesingers he had recently dramatized.

The composer had acquired some early experience with comedy in his operatic version of Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* from 1836, which became *Das Liebesverbot* (“The Ban on Love”). *Die Meistersinger* in turn is sometimes described as Wagner’s only mature comedy, yet the music drama that ultimately resulted combines a range of humor with some of the tragic themes we usually associate with Wagner’s cosmos.

What really sets *Die Meistersinger* apart in the Wagnerian canon is not so much the question of genre as that of milieu. With his post-Dresden reforms Wagner had sworn off the legacy of grand historical opera in favor of the timeless, mythic world of the *Ring*. Yet *Die Meistersinger* is set in an identifiable time and place: “Nuremberg, around the middle of the sixteenth century,” as Wagner specifies, and he drew carefully from his readings of source and secondary material to distill a sense of the historical atmosphere in his libretto. “Here history is no longer presented as legend but, divesting itself of its ‘wondrous’ mantle, reverts to its secular form,” writes the theater scholar Dieter Borchmeyer.

Even more, the archetypal Wagnerian hero—starting with *The Flying Dutchman*—had been a social outsider, an “Other” who was incapable of assimilating to the norms of his society. But *Die Meistersinger*, Borchmeyer points out, “culminates in a paean to the middle-class values of Renaissance Germany, values that the former knight Walther von Stolzing is finally forced to accept, for all his earlier attempts to shock.” You might even think of Walther as the prototypical avant-garde artist who has discovered that there actually are values in the tradition he once scorned that will not compromise but in fact will enhance the integrity of his original vision. This is how he succeeds in winning the hand of Eva Pogner together with the approbation of the Nuremberg community.

These aspects make *Die Meistersinger* an unusual work among Wagner’s mature operas, yet we should not take that status to imply a “regression” in his thinking. True, the musical language retreats from *Tristan*’s hyper-chromaticism into “stabler” tonal idioms, and



LAWRENCE B. MORRISON



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Act III's festival on the banks of the Pegnitz River, in celebration of St. John's Day, as seen in the 1938 San Francisco Opera production of *Die Meistersinger* at the War Memorial Opera House.

One of the great Hans Sachs in recent memory, James Morris is seen here with Thomas Allen as Beckmesser from the 2001 production.

the score's dazzling fabric makes room for a host of allusions to the past: chorales, marches, the "set piece" song which functions as the plot pivot, a prominent role for the chorus, even a vocal quintet—all practices which break the new "rules" Wagner the revolutionary had established in his reformist *Opera and Drama*.

Yet Wagner draws these threads together into a brilliant, complex, Romantic polyphony informed by all the advances he had made as a composer. Take the cliché of "ordered chaos" from the Rossinian act-finale of old: in the riot scene at the end of the second act, Wagner transforms this into a hyper-virtuosic, textured climax of orchestral, choral, and dramatic themes that can be counterbalanced only by the public energy that animates the opera's affirmative conclusion. It is the community-centered counterpart to a similar trajectory in the private world of *Tristan*: the resolution of the interrupted second-act love duet that is at last achieved in *Isolde*'s cathartic "love-death."

Die Meistersinger reconciles the reformist agenda that initially fueled the *Ring* with Wagner's subsequent philosophical conversion to the ideas of Arthur Schopenhauer. Crudely put, the shift that takes place is from the belief that "only love can redeem a corrupt world" to "only art can bring peace to an unavoidably mad world—a world to whose madness love contributes."

The key to this profounder dimension underlying *Meistersinger*'s comedic surface structure is Wagner's portrayal of Hans Sachs, the most sympathetic and humane character he ever created. Walther might be described as one alter ego of the composer, a portrait of the artist as a young man still driven by idealism and at odds with the establishment. But an even richer self-portrait emerges in Sachs and his insight into *Wahn*: the impossible-to-translate German word signifying a complex tangle of ideas about the folly that is the human condition.

Wahn variously means self-deception, foolish choices, collective illusion, the midsummer madness that sets the townspeople to riot the night before the song contest. It also means the suffering

that is caused by love: a topic Wagner had just treated in anguished depth in his previous opera, *Tristan und Isolde*. The "large folio" Sachs is perusing so intently at the start of the third act stands as a metaphor for Wagner's own pivotal discovery of Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy, and for the liberating wisdom he believed it gave him by revealing the truth about *Wahn* as the unconscious force that has driven human behavior across all the patterns of "world history."

It is the third act of *Die Meistersinger*—the longest single act in Wagner, exceeding even the prologue and first act of *Götterdämmerung*—in which the opera's metamorphosis from a mere divertimento becomes most evident. (Verdi's *Falstaff* traces a somewhat comparable arc in its third act.) In the transcendently beautiful scene before *Die Meistersinger* can proceed to its public finale, Wagner weaves together these insights as Sachs renounces his love for Eva and "baptizes" Walther's recently matured, moderated art, with its subtle balance of innovation and tradition.

The anarchic impulses of *Wahn* affect love and art, the private sphere and the sphere of the community. As Borchmeyer observes: "The fires of poetry and love—which are one and the selfsame thing—point to chaos and unknown terrors. ... Sachs gives Walther a lesson in poetics that is entirely Schopenhauerian in spirit, aiming, as it does, to achieve an aesthetic catharsis of this *Wahn*, whether it finds expression in the aggressions and violence of the Midsummer Night riot, in lovesick passion, or in a poetic ardor that defies all rules. Art is intended to bring 'peace to *Wahn*.'"

And here enters in a terrible irony: *Die Meistersinger*, that warmly humane, generous, and wise vision leavened with comedy, had the misfortune of being singled out by Hitler as a favorite work of the Third Reich, thus inevitably tainting Sachs' final peroration to the cause of "sacred German art." Even apart from that awful chapter in its reception history, contemporary scholarship has examined the possibility of a darker undercurrent to Wagner's utopian vision of Nuremberg for which the composer himself is responsible.

A Fitting Farewell

The arguments are complex, but they essentially boil down to interpretations of the portrayal of Sixtus Beckmesser. Does he encode the poisonous anti-Semitism that was undeniably one of Wagner's obsessions? Barry Millington, a prominent Wagner scholar and among the leading exponents of this interpretation, points out that the grotesque parody that makes Beckmesser a public laughingstock underscores "artistic failings [that] are also precisely those ascribed to the Jews in *Das Judenthum in der Musik*"—the anti-Semitic pamphlet Wagner had published anonymously in 1850 and republished under his name in 1869, only a year after the triumphant premiere of *Die Meistersinger* in Munich.

Borchmeyer counterargues that Beckmesser is portrayed as "the most doctrinaire of the Masters"—who, according to Sachs, "embody all that is 'German and genuine.'" Wagner's guiding idea for Beckmesser, claims Borchmeyer, was rather that the town clerk embodies "an academic purist critic." Another view, lying somewhere in the middle, is given by such commentators as the recent German biographer Jens Malte Fischer and Stanford University Wagner scholar Thomas Grey. "The possibility remains that a strain of anti-Semitic 'coding' of characters such as Beckmesser, Mime, or Alberich was part of Wagner's intent, but at a subtextual level," suggests Grey. "Neither a fully consistent component of the roles nor one available to the general public, but reserved for initiates."

What is indisputable about Beckmesser is his function from Wagner's earliest recorded concept for the opera (the 1845 sketch), in which the clerk embodies the familiar trope found in opera buffa and other classic forms of comedy: the unsuitable suitor vying for the desirable young bride but thwarted, so that the "right" couple wins out in the end. To this is added Beckmesser's comic role as a pedant and critic incapable of appreciating the need for innovation: the epitome, in other words, of the "conservative" from the perspective of what nowadays is frequently castigated as "the liberal media."

And it is worth noting that the other mastersingers are also the object of Wagner's parody in the lengthy scene—one of the most unusual in all opera—in which the composer actually dramatizes what is essentially a committee meeting. So, too, such smaller roles as that of the Night Watchman. Biographer Martin Geck observes that "the final note of his song 'Hört ihr Leut,' F, [is] followed by a dissonant G-flat on his horn, implying a particularly inept official."

Behind its representations of pageantry, pedantry, and piety—behind its comfortably familiar comic paradigms of young love and of bright new ideas finally winning an audience—*Die Meistersinger* turns out to be a vastly richer and more complex work than any one perspective can encompass (and indeed more so than Wagner himself could have anticipated).

This complexity of characterizations and points of focus is the theatrical equivalent of the dense, ceaselessly active polyphony that is the hallmark of Wagner's score for *Die Meistersinger*. What Wagner created here is "no ordinary comedy" but can actually "help us, as all great art can," writes the beloved opera commentator M. Owen Lee: "For it ponders the madness that sometimes affects human lives, even as it celebrates the mutual interdependence of our lives and, above all, the importance of art in our civilizations." ■

Thomas May is a longtime regular contributor to San Francisco Opera's programs and the author of Decoding Wagner: An Invitation to His World of Music Drama.

A beloved art form facing the challenge of rapidly changing times and sensibilities; a venerable institution that struggles to balance the pulls of tradition and innovation; the wisdom of experience juxtaposed with the spontaneous inspiration of youth: you might almost be tempted to think that Richard Wagner tailor-made *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* as a valentine for the head of a major international opera company nearing the end of a highly influential career.

The themes around which *Die Meistersinger* revolves make Wagner's comic masterpiece uncannily fitting for this final season of David Gockley's tenure as General Director of San Francisco Opera.

Not that it would have been out of place at any point during his years here. Yet with its dramatization of the transfer of artistic authority, *Die Meistersinger* represents a particularly resonant choice for San Francisco Opera audiences this season—especially in light of the recent announcement that Matthew Shilvock will take on the reins as new General Director on August 1, 2016.

"I can see a parallel relationship to the role of Sachs and the challenge faced by the next generation," says Gockley. "A younger person needs to take this company further but, to succeed, cannot lose the framework of what has kept people attracted to it. Over my 45 years of experience I've developed a philosophy that could be summed up as 'change, but not too quickly.'"

Regular San Francisco Opera audiences will recall that *Tannhäuser* was the very opera David Gockley chose back in 2007 for the first new production under his tenure as General Director. At the time Gockley remarked: "Producing *Tannhäuser* can become a statement of how a company views itself and what it thinks opera ultimately is: how we have to keep moving into the future but are rooted in tradition, as Wagner himself felt he was at this point in his career." With *Die Meistersinger* Gockley thus comes full circle in his final season, framing his San Francisco Opera years with the two works Wagner initially conceived in tandem and which dramatize the role of art itself.

Says Gockley: "Of all the mythical and archetypal operas Wagner wrote, *Die Meistersinger* offers the comforting relief of a deeply human story featuring a wonderful panoply of characters who interact with some of the most stirring and touching music of the repertoire. It is one of my most cherished operas."

Bernd Weikl as Sachs and Karita Mattila as Eva from the 1993 production.



MARTY SOHL / SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Conductor's Note

Music director of the prestigious Hallé Orchestra, Sir Mark Elder is making his long-awaited San Francisco Opera debut with this production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.



CHRIS CHRISTODOULOU

As many people are aware, the project for Richard Wagner to complete his visionary operatic tetralogy the *Ring* took years and years. For most of his life, Wagner was penniless, but while he was writing the *Ring*, he decided to call a halt in order to write two works that would make some money and could be staged by any German theater (or so he thought!). He first wrote *Tristan und Isolde*, which turned into one of the greatest love poems—long, arduous, and extremely difficult to put on—and then followed it with his great humane comedy, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. As he wrote *Die Meistersinger*, Wagner became more and more fascinated by a subplot in the story that involved the historical poet and shoemaker Hans Sachs, a character that was so close to his imagination that as the piece progressed, the scale of the comedy expanded.

The music that the story of *Die Meistersinger* needed was completely different from the music that was required for the gods, dwarves, and giants of the *Ring*. It needed to be music that spoke warmly and yet with great variety and vivacity. The music has a mercurial quality; it changes very quickly depending on the character who is singing. This quality had developed in Wagner's previous operas, particularly *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, which also have enormous variety of imagination. But if he was intending to write a comedy that any German theater could put on, he had to write it to scale. The orchestra for *Die Meistersinger* is a large classical orchestra. The obvious comparison is Mozart's *The Magic Flute* or Beethoven's *Fidelio* which has the normal wind section, trombones only for the special serious moments, trumpets written for brilliance and simplicity, only occasional use of the harp, and very little percussion except for the final celebratory scene. This smaller scale gives the music an intimacy and, I would say, an informality that is extremely attractive and immediately enjoyable.

In listening to this opera for the first time, you will find that the orchestra is full of interest and, even, distraction. As Richard Strauss was to do later, the orchestra reflects all the events of the story, at the same time that the characters (and there are many of them; it is a very large cast) are playing out this complicated, entertaining, melancholy, romantic comedy. Wagner's ability to create mood is by now supreme. (Verdi was the only other composer to do it so well.) A few notes conjure up a whole atmosphere; a change of key, a change of texture produces a completely different world. Furthermore, the text is very wordy, but it is very brilliantly written and creates character with a sure sense of purpose. How different are all these people, how well they know each other, but how divided they are in their attitudes! It is called *Die Meistersinger*, because in the end it is about a whole community and not just about the hero and the heroine. By the conclusion, we should feel that we really know something about this community through the personalities of the story, the festive spirit in the finale with its trumpet fanfares, and its sense of tradition being honored. Finally,

what really matters is that this close-knit community has been moved to accept someone with a completely new artistic approach.

For me, the opera is full of the most beautiful moments; two of them I would say are my favorites. In the second act, which takes place during a summer night, there is mischief in the air, because of the tensions between the characters. But, of course, in a medieval town there would be a night watchman whose horn warns everybody to settle down for the night, and assures them they are in safe hands. The sound of the distant horn in the middle of the act, and the music of peaceful tranquility that comes immediately after it, is a sign of a great theater composer, showing us something that goes beyond just the words.

My other favorite moment is also a moment of stillness. In the middle of the third act, the characters join together to bless the new poem that Walther has just created. They need to consecrate this achievement in the hope that it will win the competition. Eva launches what becomes one of the most beautiful passages in opera. Her radiant assurance moves the others to want to comment, and in so doing, they unexpectedly create a quintet—the climax of the first half of the third act.

The music of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* remains so important to me as the years go by. I first conducted the work 35 years ago, but I still find even more depth and beauty in it. The beauty is inexhaustible, and continues to move us generation after generation. 🌱



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ARTIST PROFILES



SIR MARK ELDER
(Hexham, England)
Conductor

Sir Mark Elder is making his San Francisco Opera conducting debut with *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. He is

music director of the Hallé Orchestra, a principal artist of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and artistic director of Opera Rara. Formerly, Elder was music director of English National Opera from 1979 to 1993 and has been principal guest conductor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, and London Mozart Players. He has appeared annually at the BBC Proms in London for many years, and works regularly in the most prominent international opera houses including the Bayreuth Festival (where he was the first English conductor to conduct a new production), Amsterdam, Zurich, Geneva, Berlin, and Sydney. Operatic engagements include a complete performance of *Parsifal* at the BBC Proms with the Hallé; *Tannhäuser* and *La Bohème* at the Opéra National de Paris; *Benvenuto Cellini* for Netherlands Opera; *Billy Budd*, *Falstaff*, and *La Traviata* for Glyndebourne; and several productions for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden including *Wozzeck*, *Fidelio*, *La Bohème*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and *L'Étoile*. Elder was knighted in 2008, and was awarded Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2011.



JAMES RUTHERFORD
(Norwich, England)
Hans Sachs

Baritone James Rutherford made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2007, performing the role

of Wolfram von Eschenbach in Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Since winning the inaugural Seattle Opera International Wagner competition in 2006, Rutherford has become renowned for his interpretations of German romantic opera. He has sung Hans Sachs (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) for the Bayreuth Festival, Vienna State Opera, Hamburg Opera, Cologne Opera, Budapest Wagner

Festival, and in the David McVicar production at the Glyndebourne Festival; Kurwenal (*Tristan und Isolde*) for Washington National Opera; and the title role in *Der fliegende Holländer* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons.

In 2009 he began a major association with the Graz Opera, singing his first Hans Sachs and returning for Barak (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*), Germont (*La Traviata*), Iago (*Otello*), Orest (*Elektra*), and the title role of *Falstaff*. He has performed Jochanaan (*Salome*) at the Vienna State Opera, Berlin State Opera, and Opéra National de Montpellier. Other appearances include the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Paris Opéra; Lyric Opera of Chicago; Welsh National Opera; English National Opera; Scottish Opera; and Opera North.

Recent concert appearances include Adams's *Nixon in China* (BBC Proms, Berlin Festival), conducted by the composer; Mandryka (*Arabella*) in Amsterdam and Hamburg; Wotan in Act 3 of *Die Walküre* (Philharmonia Orchestra) for Wagner's 200th birthday; and an invitation by Prince Charles to sing Hans Sachs at his 65th birthday Wagner gala at Buckingham Palace. Last season, Rutherford sang the title role of *Guillaume Tell* and Scarpia (*Tosca*) in Graz, Orest in Hamburg, and Lysiart (*Euryanthe*) in Frankfurt.

He recently sang Orest with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and Boston's Symphony Hall. Upcoming performances include his first Wotan in Frankfurt Opera's *Ring* cycle. His CD of Wagner arias with Andrew Litton and the Bergen Philharmonic is available on the BIS label.



BRANDON JOVANOVIČ
(Billings, Montana)
Walther von Stolzing

Tenor Brandon Jovanovich makes his role debut as Walther von Stolzing, returning to San

Francisco Opera after memorable performances in the Company's *Susannah* in 2014, *Lohengrin* in 2012, and *Ring* cycle in 2011. Highlights of his 2014–15 season included Sergei in Shostakovich's *Lady*

Macbeth of Mtsensk and Don José in *Carmen* at the Metropolitan Opera, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and San Francisco Symphony, a concert version of *Fidelio* with the San Francisco Symphony, and Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* with Jiří Bělohlávek and the Czech Philharmonic at Vienna's Musikverein. Recently, he performed the Prince in David McVicar's new production of *Rusalka* at Lyric Opera of Chicago and Don José at LA Opera, the Dallas Opera, Opernhaus Zürich, and Houston Grand Opera. In the 2015–16 season, Jovanovich returns to Zurich for his role debuts as the Drum Major in a new production of *Wozzeck* and as Hermann in Robert Carsen's production of *Pique Dame*. He will return to the Bavarian State Opera in Munich as the Chevalier des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut*, and as Don José. Jovanovich concludes his season with his company debut at Opera Australia as Don José.



RACHEL WILLIS-SØRENSEN
(Richland, Washington)
Eva

Soprano Rachel Willis-Sørensen makes her San Francisco Opera

debut and role debut as Eva in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. She recent debuted at the Metropolitan Opera and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. She has also appeared as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at Houston Grand Opera, and Gutrune in *Götterdämmerung* at the Royal Opera House. Her recent and forthcoming concert performances include Mahler's Second Symphony with the Dresden Staatskapelle, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with both the Accademia Santa Cecilia and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Agathe in *Der Freischütz* in concert with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Sir Mark Elder, and Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Edo de Waart. This season, Willis-Sørensen sings Elsa in *Lohengrin* with the Deutsche

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Oper Berlin, Donna Anna at the Vienna State Opera, and the Countess for both the Vienna State Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. She is a recent alumna of the Houston Grand Opera Studio.



MARTIN GANTNER

(Freiburg, Germany)

Sixtus Beckmesser

Baritone Martin Gantner makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Sixtus Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger von*

Nürnberg after making his Metropolitan Opera debut last season in the same role. Gantner also appeared last season as the Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Paris Opéra and Opernhaus Zürich, and, also in Zurich, Telramund in *Lohengrin* and Don Pizarro in *Fidelio*. Other career highlights include Don Pizarro at the Theater an der Wien/Theater an der Wien, Faninal in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, The Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Salzburg Festival, Wolfram von Eschenbach in *Tannhäuser* in Bologna, and Jochanaan in *Salome* in St. Gallen. He has also sung Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Music Master at LA Opera, Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* in Zurich, Albert in *Werther* at the Vienna State Opera, and Eisenstein at the Berlin State Opera. He was named Kammersänger of Munich's Bavarian State Opera in 2005. Later this season he performs as Faninal at Lyric Opera of Chicago and Opéra Bastille.



ALEK SHRADER

(Alva, Oklahoma)

David

Tenor Alek Shrader made his San Francisco Opera debut as Victorin in 2008's *Die Tote Stadt* and returned

as Nemorino in both *The Elixir of Love* and *The Elixir of Love for Families* as well as Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and, last season, as Emilio in *Partenope*. He recently appeared as Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Opera Philadelphia, Camille

in a new production of *The Merry Widow* at the Metropolitan Opera, Jupiter and Apollo in Handel's *Semele* with the Seattle Opera, Count Almaviva at the Canadian Opera Company, Tonio in *La Fille du Régiment* at Santa Fe Opera, and, in concert, the title role of *Candide* with the Vancouver Symphony. Upcoming engagements include Count Almaviva at Baltimore Lyric Opera and Tom Rakewell

in *The Rake's Progress* with the Pittsburgh Opera. A former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and alumnus of the Merola Opera Program and Music Academy of the West, Shrader is a 2007 winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and received a 2007 Sarah Tucker Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Foundation.

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SASHA COOKE
(College Station, Texas)
Magdalene
Grammy Award-winning mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke made her San Francisco Opera

debut creating the title role in the world premiere of Adamo's *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* in 2013, and returned this past summer to sing Anna in *Les Troyens*. Cooke appears frequently this season singing Mahler, whose works she has sung to great acclaim on four different continents. She has performed with conductors Jiri Bělohlávek, Sir Andrew Davis, Alan Gilbert, Bernard Haitink, James Levine, Leonard Slatkin, Tugan Sokhiev, Michael Tilson Thomas, Edo de Waart, and Jaap van Zweden. This season, she performs *Das Lied von der Erde* with the New World Symphony and San Francisco Symphony with appearances at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center. Upcoming engagements include the world premiere of Mark Grey's *Frankenstein* at La Monnaie in Brussels, a European tour of Handel's *Orlando*, and symphonic performances in Ottawa, Seattle, Singapore, Tucson, and with the New York Philharmonic. Recent operatic highlights include the world premiere of Joby Talbot's *Everest* at the Dallas Opera, Kitty Oppenheimer in *Doctor Atomic* at the Metropolitan Opera and English National Opera, Magnolia in *Show Boat* at Houston Grand Opera, Smeton in *Anna Bolena* at Opéra National de Bordeaux, and Olga in *Eugene Onegin* at the Israeli Opera.



AIN ANGER
(Saaremaa, Estonia)
Veit Pogner
Bass Ain Anger makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Veit Pogner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

Renowned for his Wagner roles, Anger debuted at the Bayreuth Festival in 2009 under Christian Thielemann as Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* before singing Hunding in new *Ring* cycles at the Bavarian State Opera, Vienna State Opera, and Frankfurt Opera. He made

an acclaimed debut at Teatro alla Scala as Daland in *Der fliegende Holländer* under Hartmut Haenchen and appeared at the BBC Proms with Deutsche Oper Berlin in *Tannhäuser* under Donald Runnicles. A mainstay of the Vienna State Opera stage since his house debut as Monterone in *Rigoletto* in 2004, Anger has now sung more than forty roles there. Opera highlights this season include a debut at the Royal Opera House as Pimen in Richard Jones's new production of *Boris Godunov*, as well as a role debut as Cardinal Brogni in Calixto Bieito's new production of *La Juive* for the Bavarian State Opera. Roles in Vienna include Dossifei in *Khovanshchina*, Hunding in *Die Walküre*, and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* alongside a return to Munich as Pimen under Vasily Petrenko and Il Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*.



PHILIP HORST
(Lansing, Michigan)
Fritz Kothner
Bass-baritone Philip Horst made his San Francisco Opera debut as Leporello (*Don Giovanni*) in 1999 and returned

in productions of *Parsifal*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Dead Man Walking*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, *Carmen*, *Kát'a Kabanová*, *Rigoletto*, and *Jenůfa*; he also appeared as Panthée in last summer's *Les Troyens*. Recent career highlights include the title role of *Wozzeck* for the Israeli Opera, Simone in Zemlinsky's *A Florentine Tragedy* with Greek National Opera, Tomsky in *Pique Dame* at the Komische Oper Berlin, Mandryka in *Arabella* with Theater St. Gallen and Frankfurt Opera, the Gamekeeper in *Rusalka* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Scarpia in *Tosca* with Seattle Opera, Orest in *Elektra* with Des Moines Metro Opera, and roles in *The Nose* in Aix-en-Provence and Lyon. He has appeared at the Metropolitan Opera as Ostasio in *Francesca da Rimini*, and in that company's productions of *The Nose*, *La Traviata*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Das Rheingold*, *The Gambler*, and *Capriccio*. Horst is a graduate of the Merola Opera Program and a former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow.



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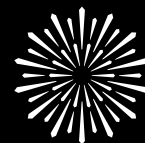
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AJ GLUECKERT
(Portland, Oregon)
Kunz Vogelgesang
Tenor AJ Glueckert has appeared this San Francisco Opera season as Beadle Bamford in *Sweeney Todd* and Normanno

in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. A former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow who made his Company debut in the world premiere of *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* in 2013, he has also performed for the Company as Mr. Knox in *Dolores Claiborne*, the Steersman in *Der fliegende Holländer*, Ambrogio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *The Barber of Seville for Families*, Flavio in *Norma*, Elder Gleaton in *Susannah*, and the Chief Magistrate in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. As a former resident artist with Minnesota Opera, he was heard as Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and also created the role of the Crown Prince in the world premiere of Puts's *Silent Night* with Opera Philadelphia. Upcoming engagements include Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) with Opera Theatre of St. Louis and roles with the Glyndebourne Festival Opera and English National Opera. Glueckert is a graduate of the young artists programs at Santa Fe Opera and Utah Opera, a two-time winner of the regional Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, and holds a degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.



JOEL SORENSEN
(Canton, Ohio)
Balthasar Zorn
Tenor Joel Sorensen made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2004 as the Mosquito in Janáček's *The Cunning Little*

Vixen, returning as Spoletta in *Tosca*, Dr. Caius in *Falstaff*, and creating the role of Mr. Pease in the 2013 world premiere of *Dolores Claiborne*. He appeared as Elder Hayes in last fall's *Susannah* and created the role of Sciortino in last summer's world premiere of *Two Women*. During his long association with New York City Opera he performed in more than two dozen productions, including *Prince Igor*, *Falstaff*, *La Rondine*, *Il Trittico*, *Mefistofele*, and *Mathis der Maler*. Other

career highlights include Spoletta, Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*, Valzacchi in *Der Rosenkavalier*, and Andrès, Cochenille, Pitichinaccio, and Frantz in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Metropolitan Opera; Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette*, Beppe in *Pagliacci*, Pang in *Turandot*, Curley in *Of Mice and Men*, and Tentatore/Cavaliere in Pizzetti's *Assassinio nella Cattedrale* at San Diego Opera; Spoletta, Caius, Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Wilhelm in *The Ghosts of Versailles* at LA Opera; Herodes in *Salome* at Florentine Opera; Mime in *Das Rheingold* with Longborough Festival, UK; and Andres in *Wozzeck* with the Landestheater in Salzburg. He also performed the role of Balthasar Zorn at Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2013. Upcoming performances include Spoletta at San Diego Opera and Curley at Manitoba Opera.



COREY BIX
(Clarinda, Iowa)
Augustin Moser
Tenor Corey Bix made his San Francisco Opera debut as the Fourth Jew in *Salome* (2009) and last summer

sang the role of Énée in *Les Troyens*. Other career highlights include Heinrich in *Tannhäuser* with Lyric Opera of Chicago; Lennie in *Of Mice and Men* with Utah Opera and Tulsa Opera; Sir Edgar Aubry in *Der Vampyr* with New Orleans Opera; Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) at the Glimmerglass Festival, Washington National Opera, the Vienna Volksoper, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, and Fort Worth Opera; Erik in *Der fliegende Holländer* with LA Opera, Hungarian National Opera, and Arizona Opera; Alfred in *Die Fledermaus* with Anchorage Opera; the Prince in *Rusalka*, and the title role of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* with Greek National Opera; Kaiser in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Graz; Florestan in *Fidelio* with Utah Opera; and Aegisth in *Elektra* with Des Moines Metro Opera. Bix is the former winner of the Robert Lauch Memorial Grant from the Wagner Society of New York and the George London/Kirsten Flagstad Award. Later this season he will appear as Lennie at Austin Lyric Opera and Erik at Virginia Opera.



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JOSEPH HU
(Taipei, Taiwan)
Ulrich Eisslinger
Tenor Joseph Hu makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Ulrich Eisslinger in *Die Meistersinger von*

Nürnberg, reprising the same role that he performed at Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2013. Hu is closely associated with San Diego Opera, where he has appeared during 17 seasons. Among his many roles have been Abdallo in *Nabucco*, Gastone in *La Traviata*, Pong in *Turandot*, Remendado in *Carmen*, Spoletta in *Tosca*, Borsa in *Rigoletto*, and Goro in *Madama Butterfly*. He has also appeared frequently at the Dallas Opera. The role of Goro has brought Hu to many major North American companies, in Vancouver, Cleveland, Tulsa, Detroit, and Baltimore. He made his international debut in that role at the Israeli Opera (Tel Aviv). Hu has also appeared with the San Antonio Symphony, Tulsa Philharmonic, and National Symphony of Taiwan. He made his Carnegie Hall debut as the tenor soloist in Mozart's Requiem.



SAM HANDLEY
(Union City, Tennessee)
Konrad Nachtigall
Bass-baritone Sam Handley makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Konrad Nachtigall in *Die*

Meistersinger von Nürnberg. Highlights of Handley's other recent appearances have been in the Cleveland Orchestra's *Salome*; Colline in *La Bohème* at the Castleton Festival and Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts (both under Lorin Maazel); and Escamillo in *Carmen* in Aachen, Germany, Handley's European debut. Other major engagements include *La Cenerentola* in San Francisco Opera's Merola Program; *Don Pasquale* in a Santa Fe Opera tour; Robert Nelson's *A Room with a View* (DVD); *Acis and Galatea* and Telemann's *Don Quichotte* at Houston's Mercury Baroque; and world premieres of music by Scott Gendel and Dan Black (Madison

Contemporary Orchestra) and Kenneth Schermerhorn (Nashville Symphony Orchestra). Handley has performed with Washington's National Symphony Orchestra, the Houston Symphony, and Santa Fe Symphony.



EDWARD NELSON
(Santa Clarita, California)
Hermann Ortel
A first-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow, baritone Edward Nelson made his

San Francisco Opera debut last summer as John Buckley in the world premiere of *Two Women*. This fall he is featured in the Company's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Debussy's *La Chute de la Maison Usher*. Other recent engagements include the Ferryman (Britten's *Curlew River*) with the Tanglewood Music Festival and Montreal's Ballet-Opéra-Pantomime. He has also performed the title role of Britten's *Owen Wingrave*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, and Forester in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* with the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where he holds undergraduate and graduate degrees. On the concert stage, Nelson has been a soloist with the American Choral Directors Association and the Reno Philharmonic. A national semi-finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, he is a winner of the 2013 Opera Columbus International Vocal Competition.



ANTHONY REED
(Alexandria, Minnesota)
Hans Schwarz
Bass Anthony Reed made his San Francisco Opera debut in various roles in *Les Troyens*

and appeared again this fall as The Speaker and Second Armored Man in *The Magic Flute*. He is a first-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and alumnus of the 2014 Merola Opera Program. Roles in his repertory include Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Truffaldin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Dulcamara in *L'Elisir*

d'Amore, Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, and the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, among others. Reed received a 2011 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Regional Encouragement Award and has been a young artist at the Wolf Trap Opera Studio and the Seagle Music Colony, in addition to his studies at the Curtis Institute of Music and the University of Wisconsin.



MATTHEW STUMP
(Goshen, Indiana)
Hans Foltz
Bass-baritone Matthew Stump made his San Francisco Opera debut last summer as a Trojan Soldier

in *Les Troyens*. He is a first-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and graduate of the 2014 Merola Opera Program, where he appeared in scenes in the Schwabacher Summer Concert as Walter in *Luisa Miller* and Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*. He has performed the title role of *Sweeney Todd*, the Prime Minister in *Cendrillon*, the Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Capulet in *Roméo et Juliette* at the University of North Texas as well as the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, and Frank in *Street Scene* at Luther College, where he holds a bachelor's degree. Stump holds awards from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and Dallas Opera Guild.

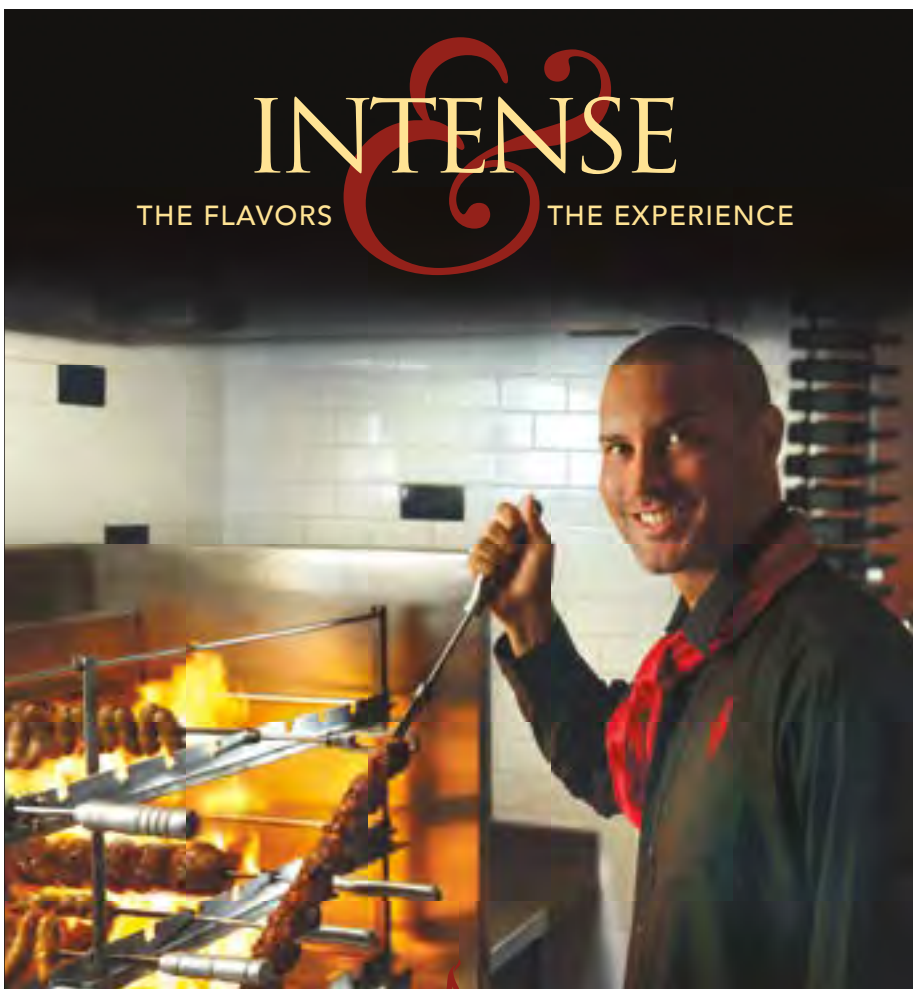


ANDREA SILVESTRELLI
(Candia di Ancona, Italy)
Night Watchman
Bass Andrea Silvestrelli appeared earlier this season as Wurm in *Luisa*

Miller and will sing later this season in San Francisco Opera's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* as Don Basilio and in *Don Carlo* as the Grand Inquisitor. In 1998, he made his San Francisco Opera debut as Orovoso in *Norma* and returned as Fasolt in *Das Rheingold*, Il Talpa in *Il Tabarro* and Simone in *Gianni Schicchi* in the Company's production of *Il Trittico*, Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*,



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Fasolt and Hagen in the 2011 *Ring* cycle, and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. Silvestrelli's career highlights include Simone and Basilio with LA Opera; Sparafucile with Houston Grand Opera and Washington National Opera; Hunding and Fasolt in Seattle Opera's *Ring* cycle; and Colline in *La Bohème*, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, and Timur in *Turandot* with Lyric Opera of Chicago. Silvestrelli's other recent engagements include Sarastro and Osmin with the Santa Fe Opera, Fafner with Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Chicago, and his Metropolitan Opera debut as Sparafucile.



LAUREL PORTER

(Hopkins, Minnesota)
Apprentice
 Mezzo-soprano
 Laurel Porter, a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, made her

solo debut with the Company in the 2013 world premiere of *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* and appeared this fall in *Sweeney Todd* as a member of the Quintet and Ensemble. She has performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Glimmerglass Festival, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Chicago Opera Theater, Sarasota Opera, Utah Festival Opera, and Virginia Opera. Roles in her repertoire include Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, and the title roles of *La Cenerentola* and *Ariodante*.



SIR DAVID McVICAR

(Glasgow, Scotland)
Production
 Sir David McVicar made his San Francisco Opera debut with *Don Giovanni* in 2007; his production of *Il*

Trovatore was seen here in 2009, followed by *Les Troyens* last summer. Career highlights include *Macbeth* at the Mariinsky Theatre; *Salome* at Royal Opera, Covent Garden; *Il Trovatore* at the Metropolitan Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Billy Budd* and *Giulio Cesare* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and *Semele* at the Théâtre des

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Champs-Élysées; *Alcina* at English National Opera; *Manon* at the Dallas Opera and English National Opera; and *Agrippina* at Frankfurt Opera, the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. His work has been seen frequently at Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where his credits include the recent *Andrea Chénier* and televised productions of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Faust*, *Die Zauberflöte*, and *Rigoletto*. Other productions include *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, *Giulio Cesare* for the Glyndebourne Festival; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for the Salzburg Festival; *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Don Giovanni*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Hamlet*, and *Il Re Pastore* for Opera North (U.K.); *Tosca*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *The Rape of Lucretia* for English National Opera; *The Turn of the Screw* for the Mariinsky Theatre and English National Opera; and *Tamerlano* for Deutsche Oper Berlin. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2012.



MARIE LAMBERT

(Paris, France)

Revival Co-Director

Marie Lambert is making her San Francisco Opera debut with this production, which she collaborated

on with David McVicar at its 2011 Glyndebourne premiere and revived at Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2013. Lambert studied literature in Paris and Bologna before training in directing at La Scala. As performer and director, she worked on plays by Marivaux, Schnitzler, Goldoni, Calaferte, and Molière. She revived *La Traviata* (Welsh National Opera and Gran Teatre del Liceu, Madrid), *La Clemenza di Tito* (Toulouse, Marseille, and Lyric Opera of Chicago), and *Carmen* (Glyndebourne) and has directed *La Voix humaine* at the Buxton Festival with Anne-Sophie Duprels. Lambert has collaborated with director Piero Faggioni (*La Fanciulla del West* at Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Genoa; *Don Quichotte* in Tokyo) and, since 2005, several productions with David McVicar, including *Così fan tutte* and the *Ring* cycle in Strasbourg; *Giulio Cesare* at Glyndebourne and in Lille; *Semele* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées; *Orlando* in Lille, Dijon, and at the Théâtre des

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IAN RUTHERFORD
(Ringmer, England)
Revival Co-Director
Ian Rutherford is making his San Francisco Opera debut with *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. As a staff

director for English National Opera, Rutherford directed the critically-acclaimed revivals of *The Barber of Seville*, *Falstaff*, *Madam Butterfly*, *The Magic Flute*, and *La Bohème*. Outside of Britain, he directed a new production for the Festival les Azuriales in Cap Ferrat of Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto* in 2003 and 2004. He also directed the revivals of many productions by David Alden: *Ariodante* at Houston Grand Opera, Vlaamse Opera, and Opera Oviedo; *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Canadian Opera, Opera Gothenburg, and Washington National Opera; *Peter Grimes* at Opera Oviedo and Deutsche Oper Berlin; and *Otello* at Kungliga Operan Stockholm. Recently Rutherford has worked for Glyndebourne Festival Opera directing the revivals of Michael Grandage's award-winning *Billy Budd* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Future engagements include *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Houston Grand Opera and Glyndebourne and *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Theater Bonn.



VICKI MORTIMER
(Sussex, England)
Production Designer
Vicki Mortimer is making her San Francisco Opera debut with *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Trained

at London's Slade School of Fine Art, the British designer has a career in both theater and opera, working extensively with the Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre, Almeida Theatre,

Young Vic, and Donmar Warehouse. Among her most acclaimed designs have been for plays of Beckett, Ibsen, and Chekhov at the RSC; Stoppard, Chekhov, and Lorca at the National; *The Wild Duck* and *The Real Thing* at the Donmar; *Closer* by Patrick Marber at the National, in the West End, and on Broadway; and *1953* and *Heartbreak House* at the Almeida. She made her Royal Opera, Covent Garden debut in 2013 with George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* and returns this season for *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Her other opera designs include *Jenůfa* and *Káta Kabanová* at Welsh National Opera, *The Turn of the Screw* at Scottish Opera, and David Leveaux's production of *Salome* at English National Opera. With Leveaux, she has worked extensively in Japan, where she is the head of design for Theatre Project Tokyo. Mortimer has also collaborated with choreographer Wayne McGregor for works created for the Royal Ballet, Random Dance, Paris Opéra Ballet, and Nederlands Dans Theater.



PAULE CONSTABLE
(Brighton, England)
Lighting Designer
Paule Constable is making her San Francisco Opera debut with *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. The

British designer has created lighting for more than 25 operas, ranging stylistically from *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (Paris, Strasbourg, and Brussels) to *Death in Venice* (Aldeburgh, Bregenz). Among her eleven productions at Glyndebourne have been *Billy Budd*, *Giulio Cesare*, and the staged version of the *St. Matthew Passion*. Other operatic credits include productions for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; English National Opera; the Metropolitan Opera (*Anna Bolena*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Merry Widow*, and *Le Nozze di Figaro*, among others); and Salzburg Festival (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*). Constable's theater work includes a close association with the Royal National Theatre encompassing over 30 productions, among them *Women of Troy*, *His Dark Materials*, *Phedre*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, and *Ivanov*. Four of her National Theatre productions have been seen on Broadway: *War Horse*

(Tony Award), *Coram Boy*, *Jumpers*, and *Amadeus*. Constable has worked at the Donmar Warehouse, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Old Vic, the Royal Court, the Theatre de Complicite, and extensively in the West End and at the Royal Ballet. She won a Tony Award this year for her work on *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*.



JEREMY TURNBULL
(Bexhill, England)
Associate Lighting Designer
Jeremy Turnbull is making his San Francisco Opera debut with *Die Meistersinger von*

Nürnberg. Since 2002, he has been lighting desk programmer for Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Opera. He now works for the National Theatre as a Lighting Supervisor. Lighting design work includes *On the Rim of the World* and *A Shadow Awaits* (Glyndebourne Education). Lighting desk programming work includes *Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert* (London's West End), and *Eugene Onegin*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Tamerlano* (Opera by Definitions). Turnbull's most recent duties includes serving as programmer and assistant to the lighting designer for Glyndebourne on Tour's production of *Don Giovanni* and revival lighting designer for Glyndebourne's *Rusalka* production at SNG Opera in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He made his American debut with the 2013 co-production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at Lyric Opera of Chicago.



ANDREW GEORGE
(Tonyrefail, Wales)
Choreographer
Andrew George is currently making his San Francisco Opera debut with *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. George

trained at London's Laban Centre. His repertoire in prestigious theaters internationally encompasses Baroque works (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in Paris, Strasbourg, Berlin, Brussels, and Copenhagen; *Giulio Cesare* at Glyndebourne, the Metropolitan Opera, and Opera de Lille); *Don Giovanni* at the

Metropolitan Opera; *Anna Bolena* at the Metropolitan Opera; *Il Trovatore* at LA Opera; the *Ring* cycle at Strasbourg's Opera National du Rhin; *Les Troyens* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Handmaid's Tale* at English National Opera; and *A Little Night Music* at Paris's Châtelet. His work has also been seen with the major companies of Amsterdam, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and St. Petersburg, as well as the Salzburg Festival, Aix-en-Provence Festival, and Innsbruck Early Music Festival. Current season engagements include *Wozzeck* at Chicago Lyric Opera.



IAN ROBERTSON
(Dundee, Scotland)
Chorus Director
Recipient of the 2012 San Francisco Opera Medal, Ian Robertson has been chorus director and conductor with San

Francisco Opera since 1987, having prepared more than 300 productions for the Company. He was awarded the Olivier Messiaen Foundation Prize in 2003 for his artistic contribution to the preparation of the Company's North American premiere of *Saint François d'Assise*. Robertson has also conducted ten main-stage productions with the Company. Other North American opera credits include productions with Sarasota Opera, Edmonton Opera, and Philadelphia's Curtis Opera Theatre. Before joining San Francisco Opera, Robertson was head of music and chorus director of Scottish Opera.



COLM SEERY
(Dublin, Ireland)
**Revival
Choreographer**
Colm Seery is currently making his San Francisco Opera debut with *Die Meistersinger*

von Nürnberg. He trained at the Irish National College of Dance before attending the Royal Ballet School. Seery danced with Dublin City Ballet, Irish National Ballet, Vienna Festival Ballet, and was a founding member of Fabulous Beast Dance Company. In the opera world, he has performed with the Royal Opera, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera Ireland, Garsington Opera, and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Elsewhere, he has worked in Lille, Paris, Dijon, Antwerp, Barcelona, Oviedo, Geneva, Dallas, and at the Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires. Recent productions include *Billy Budd* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and *La Traviata* at Welsh National Opera. Upcoming productions include *Manon* at the Dallas Opera, a revival of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at Glyndebourne, and *Gloriana* at the Teatro Real, Madrid.



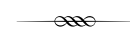
LAWRENCE PECH
(San Francisco, California)
Dance Master

Lawrence Pech is in his nineteenth season as dance master and resident choreographer for San Francisco Opera. He has created period and interpretive dances on more than sixty productions with the Company. Pech received his formal training from American Ballet Theatre (ABT) and was invited by Mikhail Baryshnikov to join that company in 1980. In 1986, he joined San Francisco Ballet, where he became a principal dancer in 1989. Pech founded two of his own dance companies and has choreographed more than fifty ballets, thirty musicals, and numerous self-produced evenings of music and dance around the world.



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DAVE MAIER
(Great Neck, New
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Fight Director
Resident fight
director for San
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Dave Maier made
his Company debut

choreographing the fight scenes for
The Tales of Hoffmann in 2013. His work
most recently appeared in this season's
Lucia di Lammermoor and was also a
swordsman in the 2010 production of
Cyrano de Bergerac. Maier has directed
for American Conservatory Theater,
Berkeley Repertory Theater, San Jose
Repertory, Aurora Theatre, Marin Theatre
Company and Magic Theatre, among
others. He is a five-time recipient of the
San Francisco Bay Area Drama Critics
Circle Award for Fight Direction and an
eleven-time nominee, and he serves
as resident fight director at California
Shakespeare Theatre and a company
member with the Shotgun Players.
Maier is recognized as an instructor
of theatrical combat by Dueling Arts
International and a founding member
of Dueling Arts San Francisco. He is an
adjunct faculty member at the University
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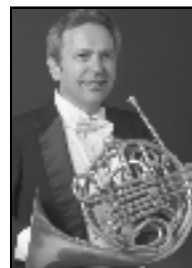
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Bass



William Pickersgill
Bass



Valery Portnov
Bass



Ken Rafanan
Baritone



Michael Rogers
Baritone



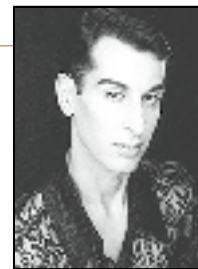
Jere Torkelsen
Baritone

*Most photos by
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*Carole Schaffer
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Anthony Striplen

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ACCESSIBILITY San Francisco Opera is committed to providing easy access for all of our patrons. Please contact the Opera Box Office prior to your visit so that we can ensure your comfort.

For Patrons in Wheelchairs, San Francisco Opera offers wheelchair-accessible seats at a range of prices. All entrances at the War Memorial Opera House are wheelchair accessible. Wheelchair-accessible stalls in restrooms can be found on all floors (except the Main Lobby and 5th floor Balcony levels). Accessible drinking fountains are located on all floors except the Balcony level.

LISTENING DEVICES Assistive listening devices are available at the North and South Lobby coat checks. ID deposit required.

LIVE TITLES: TEXT-TO-VOICE SUPERTITLES Headsets that provide a spoken version of the supertitles are available at the North Lobby coat check.

Performance Etiquette

- Please turn off and refrain from using all electronic devices before the performance, including digital watches and cell phones.
- No cameras or recording equipment are permitted in the Opera House.
- As a courtesy to those who may have fragrance allergies, please avoid wearing perfume or cologne.
- No food or drink (except water bottles) is permitted in the auditorium.
- Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket; no babes in arms.

Management reserves the right to remove any patron creating a disturbance.

DINING AND REFRESHMENTS The Patina Group serves an elegant hot buffet in the lower lounge of the Opera House beginning two hours prior to all performances. Lighter fare is also served before performances and during intermissions at Patina's Café Express (Lower level) and Dress Circle Café. Call (415) 861-8150 or visit opentable.com for reservations or to pre-order. Patrons dining in the Opera House may enter through the North Carriage entrance (adjacent to the War Memorial courtyard) up to two hours prior to curtain.

The **SAN FRANCISCO OPERA SHOP**, located on the South Mezzanine level of the Opera House, sells opera CDs, DVDs, SF Opera merchandise, and gift items. The Shop is open 90 minutes before performances, at intermissions, and afterward. All proceeds benefit San Francisco Opera.

COAT CHECK For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc. must be checked at the Opera House coat check, located at the North and South ends of the Main Lobby.

COURTESY TELEPHONE, for local calls only, is located in the main lobby across from the South passenger elevator

DRINKING FOUNTAINS are available on all levels except the Lower level, where there is a courtesy water station on the north side. Water bottles are permitted in the auditorium.

OPERA GLASSES may be rented for \$5 at the North Lobby coat check. ID deposit is requested.

LARGE PRINT CAST SHEETS AND SYNOPSIS are available at the coat check stations in the main lobby.

FIRST AID STATION is located on the South Lower level. In case of emergency, please ask the nearest usher to assist you.

LOST AND FOUND items may be claimed at the North coat check during the performance. All unclaimed items are delivered to the War Memorial Performing Arts Center at 401 Van Ness Ave., Room 110, (415) 621-6600 (8 AM–5 PM, Monday–Friday).

TAXI SERVICE Patrons desiring a taxi after a performance should come to the Grove Street Taxi Ramp located on the south side of the Opera House. Accommodations are provided on a first come, first served basis, and cannot be guaranteed as service is based on availability of licensed taxis. Staff will be on hand to assist.

San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center War Memorial Opera House

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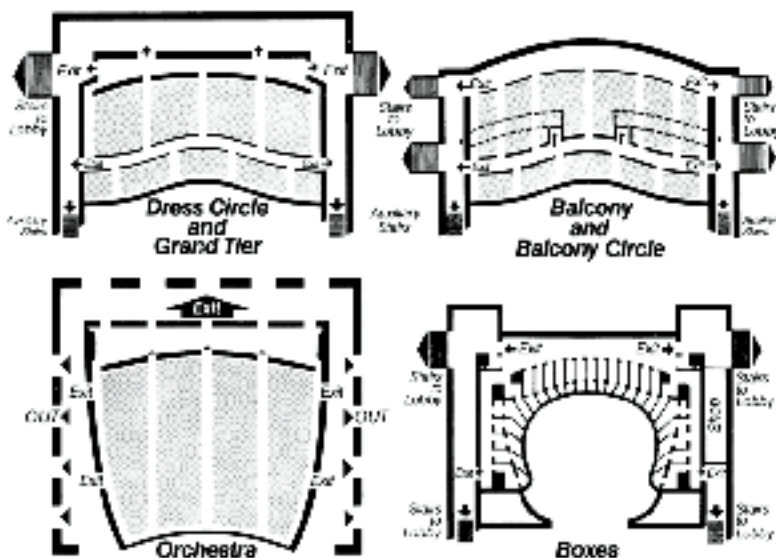
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San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center War Memorial Opera House



PATRONS, ATTENTION PLEASE! FIRE NOTICE: Please note the nearest exit. In an emergency, WALK, do not run, to the nearest exit. Disabled patrons, proceed to nearest elevator lobby and await assistance.



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