

SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA 2015-16 SEASON

Sweeney Todd

The Demon Barber of Fleet Street: A Musical Thriller

STEPHEN SONDHEIM



encore
arts programs





GUCCI

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On the cover:

English School
(19th century)
A String of Pearls or
The Friend of Fleet
Street, 1847
Bridgeman Art Library

An engraving from the penny dreadful *A String of Pearls*, where the story of Sweeney Todd originated.

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A Message from the Leaders of San Francisco Opera

Dear Opera-goers,

On behalf of the entire San Francisco Opera Association, welcome to San Francisco Opera's 93rd repertory season. It is our privilege to bring the finest operatic talent and most thoughtful productions to the stage of the War Memorial Opera House.

San Francisco Opera launches its season in a wonderfully impactful way. We open on the

Friday after the Labor Day holiday with a grand opera performance, followed by a contrasting work on Saturday evening. These openings are bookended by, on the one hand, San Francisco Opera Guild's elegant Opera Ball and the BRAVO Club's high-voltage Gala on Friday evening, and on the other, Sunday's *al fresco* Opera in the Park concert in Golden Gate Park. The opening weekend is a celebration in which our entire community participates in enriching and deeply personal ways. We are especially grateful to Dede Wilsey for sponsoring our opening weekends for the past ten years.

We welcome back Music Director Nicola Luisotti and Principal Guest Conductor Patrick Summers, the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, Chorus and Dance Corps, our guest artists, our extraordinary stage crew and all of the talented employees working in costumes, wardrobe, wigs/make-up, stage management, music staff, box office, administration, and many other areas. Opera is a remarkably diverse art form!

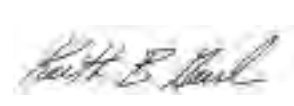
This promises to be an incredibly memorable season. Through ten very exciting productions onstage, we will celebrate General Director David Gockley's career as an opera impresario *extraordinaire* prior to his retirement in July 2016. We will open the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera in the adjacent Veterans Building, offering the Company, for the very first time, year-round performance presence with the creation of the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater. And, we will welcome a new general director, the Company's seventh.

To quote Kurt Herbert Adler, the Company's second general director, "Fulfillment in opera requires commitment on both sides of the footlights, artistic excellence and an audience willing to be involved." We thank you all, our generous sponsors, our season subscription ticket holders, and our single ticket patrons for your extraordinary support. This remarkable display of participation, affection, and interest ensures San Francisco Opera's standing as a distinguished artistic leader both nationwide and internationally.

We are honored to share the new season with you.



David Gockley
General Director



Keith B. Geeslin
President




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


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San Francisco Opera Welcomes Jordi Bernàcer

In August, Spanish conductor Jordi Bernàcer was named San Francisco Opera's resident conductor. Born in 1976 in Alcoi, Spain, where he began to study music at the age of six, he graduated in flute performance at Valencia's Joaquín Rodrigo Conservatory at eighteen where he also studied composition, musicology, and choral and orchestral conducting. He concluded his studies at the Vienna Conservatory. Recent conducting highlights include *Manon*, *Luisa Fernanda*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and *Manon Lescaut* with Valencia's

Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia; *Tosca* and *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples; *Tosca* with Los Angeles Opera; and *Carmen* at Warsaw's Teatr Wielki. In 2010, he made his San Francisco Opera debut as assistant conductor for *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

Bernàcer replaces Giuseppe Finzi, who has stepped down as the Company's resident conductor in order to accept a growing demand of international conducting assignments. The Italian-born Finzi made his debut at the War Memorial Opera House in 2008 and has conducted numerous productions during the past seven seasons, including *La Bohème* last November, *Carmen*, *Turandot*, *Aida*, *La Traviata*, and family performances of *L'Elisir d'Amore*. Finzi returns this fall to lead *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.

Nicola Luisotti's 2015–16 Season

Following his riveting performances of the world premiere of Marco Tutino's *Two Women* with the Company this summer, San Francisco Opera Music Director Nicola Luisotti is setting out for another thrilling season. This fall, Maestro Luisotti conducts world-renowned casts in both *Luisa Miller* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* with the Company. He then travels to the Netherlands to conduct concert performances with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. Other international dates on his performance schedule include conducting *Rigoletto* at Madrid's Teatro Real; a concert with the Hamburg Philharmonic; then on to London's Royal Opera, Covent Garden to lead *Il Trittico* and *La Traviata*; and to Paris Opera for *Rigoletto*. Luisotti will round out the current season by conducting *Don Carlo* at San Francisco Opera in June 2016.

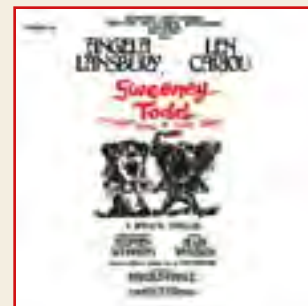


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Opera Shop Recommendations



Edgar Allen Poe fans be advised: Gordon Getty's one-act opera *Usher House* (Pentatone Classics) is now available. This 2013 recording based on the Poe tale, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, features Philip Ens and British actor Benedict Cumberbatch in superb Super Audio CD sound. SFO will give the U.S. premiere in December of *Usher House* paired with Debussy's one-act opera on the same subject.



Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler's landmark musical *Sweeney Todd* in the Original Cast Recording (Sony) features Angela Lansbury and Len Cariou; a specially priced 2-CD set on sale.



John F. Martin: *In Character: Opera Portraiture* (Amadeus Press). Unique in opera literature, Martin's magnificent portraits capture not

just the stars and chorus members but also the supernumeraries who don't make a sound but nevertheless add great color and dimension to the action on stage.

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Notes from the General Director

I realize I am on my way out to pasture when editors start asking for my top ten list of this or that. This one was initiated by the editor of this magazine who asked me to list ten operatic events that made an unusually large impression on me over the years and why. Being in

general the accommodating type, here goes...

1. My very first opera was *The Tales of Hoffmann* in the fall of 1963 at Sarah Caldwell's indomitable and now defunct Opera Company of Boston. The opera was performed in English with Beverly Sills as the heroines, Norman Treigle as the four villains, and John Alexander in the title role. It was a life-changing experience for a young would-be baritone who was mulling the decision whether or not to pursue a career as an opera singer. The performances were so compelling, the characters so believable, the music so gorgeous. No opera caricatures standing there singing in a foreign language. I was hooked!
2. My introduction to New York's old Metropolitan Opera on 39th Street was an auspicious one: Birgit Nilsson as *Elektra* in the Richard Strauss opera in the fall of 1967. The great Swedish soprano was in her prime and when she blasted out her top notes, my fillings came loose! It was my first Germanic opera and modernist to boot. The dissonant harmonies and the extreme expressions required of the voice were wrenching, the polar opposite of Offenbach's tuneful *Hoffmann*.
3. Uptown at Lincoln Center Plaza, New York City Opera had installed itself at the newly opened New York State Theater. I clearly remember a somewhat perverse production of *La Traviata* staged by maverick director Frank Corsaro, starring the gorgeous Patricia Brooks. Corsaro surprised everyone when Alfredo re-entered through a window at the end of Act I and he and Violetta made crazy love on the floor as the curtain came down. I was told that if the composer had been present he would have screamed out in protest, but I liked the gutsiness of Corsaro's direction and it certainly got everyone talking. While tame compared with today's directorial excesses, I sense it was the beginning of the "age of the director."
4. On an early scouting trip to Europe once I became head of Houston Grand Opera, I found myself crossing over to East Berlin via Checkpoint Charlie. The purpose was to see a production of *Porgy and Bess* at the very progressive Komische Oper directed by the legendary Götz Friedrich, whose American debut I would present some five years later. I subsequently learned that they were not authorized to present the opera by the copyright owners and had somehow smuggled a set of scores and orchestra parts behind the Iron Curtain. The result was a revelation: a fully operatic version of the piece with the theater's white singers and chorus playing the denizens of Catfish Row, with several characters appearing in clown make-up. It made me intent on producing an operatic *Porgy and Bess* in the U.S.
5. My Houston years produced a lot of high spots, but very few like our 1975 production of *Der Rosenkavalier* featuring the first Octavian of the young Frederica von Stade under the baton of Edo de Waart and with the staging of John Cox. We cast it impeccably, down to the last lackey, and the result was a new level of quality for the young company that we could never again retreat from. To this day I can't listen to the Act III trio without drowning in tears.
6. Jon Vickers's towering portrayal in the title role of Britten's *Peter Grimes*, seen in Houston, San Francisco, and Chicago, was perhaps the greatest individual performance in my opera-going experience. It also convinced me that Britten's opera was the greatest addition to the international repertory since Puccini's death in 1924.
7. The Centennial (1976) Bayreuth *Ring* directed by Patrice Chéreau and conducted by Pierre Boulez, which I saw in 1977, was first shocking to the public but later accepted as the most influential *Ring* in history. Set as it was during the Industrial Revolution, and pitting the working and capitalist classes against each other, it showed me that brilliantly, thoroughly conceived re-settings can work really well.
8. London's 2004 Royal Opera House production of Shostakovich's 1934 opera-noire *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, staged by Richard Jones, made a huge impression on me. I only regret that I never had the chance to produce it.
9. Yet another Bayreuth production makes my top ten. It is the Stefan Herheim 2008 *Parsifal*, a many layered concoction, each layer more brilliant than the next. The result: a synthesis of the anxiety, doubt, desperation, and longing inherent in the music. A masterpiece of the director's art, and the antithesis of the latest *Ring* in the Master's shrine, which I could not describe without the use of expletives.
10. The last of this group certainly must include last June's SFO production of *The Trojans*, especially the towering performance of Susan Graham as Dido. It was a tour-de-force that cannot be over-praised. Beyond that, every component of this great company was in top form, resulting in one of the perfect operatic realizations in memory. 🍷



KEVIN BERNE

Francesca Zambello Receives Opera Medal

On September 11, renowned director Francesca Zambello receives the San Francisco Opera Medal—the highest honor awarded by the Company to an artistic professional. Zambello began her long association with the Company in 1983 as assistant stage director for *Ariadne auf Naxos* and has since been involved in more than fifty productions here, including our current production of *Luisa Miller*, *La Voix Humaine*, *La Bohème*, *Prince Igor*, *Jenůfa*, the West Coast premiere of Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*, *Porgy and Bess*, a new production of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in 2011, and the world premieres of *Heart of a Soldier* and *Two Women*. Her work has been seen at the Metropolitan Opera; Milan's Teatro alla Scala; the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the Paris Opera; Lyric Opera of Chicago; and English National Opera. She currently serves as general and artistic director of the Glimmerglass Festival and artistic director of Washington National Opera. She has been awarded the title of *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* from the French government and the Russian Federation's medal for service to culture. Zambello joins a list of San Francisco Opera Medal recipients that includes such luminaries as Leontyne Price, Joan Sutherland, Thomas Stewart, Plácido Domingo, Susan Graham (pictured below in June 2015), Donald Runnicles, Frederica von Stade, Charles Mackerras, and John Copley.



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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA *Profile*

John Churchwell

Head of Music Staff



MARC OLIVIER LEBLANC

John Churchwell knows exactly what it takes to be San Francisco Opera's head of music staff: "Great people skills, patience, and calm under fire. But what I need most of all is an amazing group of musicians that make up the staff; people who invest their time and their hearts, really enjoy what they are doing, and care about the end product."

A collaborative pianist by training, as well as an alumnus of the Merola Opera Program, Churchwell has worked for the Company since 1998, as member of the music staff and assistant conductor. "I used to split my time between San Francisco Opera and the Metropolitan Opera in New York, where I had the same job, until, back in 2011, I was invited by Maestro Luisotti to become head of music staff in San Francisco."

Excellence

"As a member of the music staff I would be assigned to one or more specific productions each season. To work with the conductor as rehearsal pianist, help prepare the singers musically... basically do anything to help the show get from start to finish.

"Now, as the head of music staff, I manage people who do what I did, and I oversee the musical preparation in order to maintain a standard of musical excellence. My job is really to keep

a finger on the pulse of what is happening so that I can predict possible conflicts—or prevent them.

"I couldn't *dream* of doing everything myself, so I have to have a team of people that I respect and trust, who listen with good ears and problem solve just as I would do." Nevertheless, Churchwell insists on seeing most performances in person. "I really want to know what happens on stage, know how the show went. So I attend probably 90 percent of them."

Never a Dull Moment

"Right now we have two productions rehearsing simultaneously, *Sweeney Todd* and *Luisa Miller*, which is our season opener. My day largely consists of going between productions and rehearsals to see what is going on, see how things are progressing, and make sure conductors and singers are happy. I am also responsible for staffing all the rehearsals, making sure that the right musicians, conductors, pianists, and language coaches are where they need to be.

"In the first two weeks of a production, the emphasis lies more on the preparation of the singers, and it generally shifts towards what we need in the theater, how the orchestra preparation is coming along, if the balance is right. And as one show is moving to stage, another one starts rehearsals. There is never a dull moment."

—BY NIELS SWINKELS

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Stephen Sondheim was born in New York in 1930. He has written the music and lyrics for twelve Broadway musicals and the lyrics for *West Side Story*, *Gypsy*, and *Do I Hear a Waltz?* in addition to many other songs. He has composed film scores and has won an Academy Award Best Original Song for “Sooner or Later,” which was sung by Madonna in *Dick Tracy*. He won the Tony Award and the Drama Desk Award for best score for *Company*, *Follies*, *A Little Night Music*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Into the Woods*, and *Passion*. He received the Pulitzer Prize for *Sunday in the Park with George*. In 1983 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1990 he was appointed the first visiting professor of contemporary theater at Oxford University and, in 1993, was a recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors for Lifetime Achievement. In 1992 he refused to accept the National Endowment’s Medal of Arts Award because he felt the NEA had been, in his words, “transformed into a conduit and symbol of censorship and repression rather than encouragement and support.” He accepted the award in 1997.

This interview was excerpted from a craft seminar at the New School in New York City, which appeared on the Bravo network as an episode of *Inside the Actors Studio* with James Lipton.

When you were ten and your parents divorced, your mother moved to Pennsylvania and it was there at the age of eleven that you encountered Jimmy Hammerstein and were welcomed into the family of Oscar and Dorothy Hammerstein. I understand you’ve said that if Hammerstein had been a geologist, you would have become a geologist.

Yes. He was a surrogate father and a mentor to me up until his death. When I was fifteen, I wrote a show for George School, the Friends school I went to. It was called *By George* and was about the students and the faculty. I was convinced that Rodgers and Hammerstein couldn’t wait to produce it, so I gave it to Oscar and asked him to read it as if he didn’t know me. I went to bed dreaming of my name in lights on Broadway, and when I was summoned to his house the next day he asked, “Do you really want me to treat this as if I didn’t know you?” “Oh yes,” I said, to which he replied, “In that case, it’s the worst thing I’ve ever read.” He saw me blanch and continued, “I didn’t say it was untalented, but let’s look at

Stephen Sondheim

it.” He proceeded to discuss it as if it were a serious piece. He started right from the first stage direction; and I’ve often said, at the risk of hyperbole, that I probably learned more about writing songs that afternoon than I learned the rest of my life. He taught me how to structure a song, what a character was, what a scene was; he taught me how to tell a story, how not to tell a story, how to make stage directions practical.

Of course when you’re fifteen, you’re a sponge. I soaked it all up and I still practice the principles he taught me that afternoon. From then on, until the day he died, I showed him everything I wrote, and eventually had the Oedipal thrill of being able to criticize his lyrics, which was a generous thing for him to let me do.

I’ve read that one of the things you learned from him was the power of a single word.

Oscar dealt in very plain language. He often used simple rhymes like *day* and *May*, and a lot of identities like “Younger than springtime am I / Gayer than laughter am I.” If you look at “Oh, what a beautiful mornin’! / Oh, what a beautiful day!” it doesn’t seem like much on paper, but he understood what happens when music is applied to words—the words explode. They have their own rainbows, their own magic. But not on the printed page. Some lyrics read well because they’re conversational lyrics. Oscar’s do not read very well because they’re colloquial but not conversational. Without music, they sound simplistic and *written*. Yet it’s precisely the hypersimplicity of the language that gives them such force. If you listen to “What’s the Use of Wond’rin’” from *Carousel*, you’ll see what I mean.

He also stressed the importance of creating character in songs.

Remember, he’d begun as a playwright before he became a songwriter. He believed that songs should be like one-act plays, that they should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. They should set up a situation, have a development, and then a conclusion... exactly like a classically constructed play. Arthur Pinero said about playwriting: “Tell them what you’re going to do, then do it, then tell them you’ve done it.” If that’s what a play is, Oscar’s songs are little plays. He utilized that approach as early as *Show Boat*. That’s how he revolutionized musical theater—utilizing operetta principles and pasting them onto American musical comedy.

That afternoon, as I recall, Hammerstein also outlined for you a curriculum and told you he wanted you to write four things. It sounds like a wonderful fairy tale. What were they?

First, he said, take a play that you think is good, and musicalize it. In musicalizing it, you’ll be forced to analyze it. Next, take a play that you think is good but flawed, that you think could be improved, and musicalize that, seeing if you can improve it. Then take a non-play, a narrative someone else has written—it could be a novel, a short story—but not a play, not something that has been structured dramatically for the stage, and musicalize that. Then try an original. The first one I did was a play by George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly, *Beggar on Horseback*, which lends itself easily to musicalization because it’s essentially a long fantasy. We performed that at college when I was an undergraduate at Williams. I got permission from Kaufman to do it and we had three performances. It was a valuable experience, indeed. The second one, which I

couldn’t get permission for, was a play by Maxwell Anderson called *High Tor*, which I liked but thought was sort of clumsy. Then I tried to adapt *Mary Poppins*. I didn’t finish that one because I couldn’t figure out how to take a series of disparate short stories, even though the same characters existed throughout, and make an evening, make an arc. After that I wrote an original musical about a guy who wanted to become an actor and became a producer. He had a sort of Sammy Glick streak in him—he was something of an opportunist. So I wrote my idea of a sophisticated, cynical musical. It was called *Climb High*. There was a motto on a flight of stone steps at Williams, “Climb high, climb far, your aim the sky, your goal the star.” I thought, “Gee, that’s very Hammerstein-ish.” I sent him the whole thing. The first act was ninety-nine pages long. Now, the entire script of *South Pacific*, which lasted almost three hours on the stage, was only ninety-two pages. Oscar sent my script back, circled the ninety-nine, and just wrote, “Wow!”

When you graduated from Williams, you received the Hutchinson Prize for music, which was a fellowship for further study. With whom did you study?

Milton Babbitt, the avant-gardist’s avant-gardist. When I started studying with him, he had already gone beyond twelve-tone music and was working up at Columbia on synthesized music, which in those days was a science fiction, the idea being that (his example) he could make a bassoon play a high C. He was a rigorous intellectual but also happened to be a frustrated songwriter. When I first met him, he was writing a musical for Mary Martin. I would meet with him once a week for about four hours and we’d spend the first hour analyzing his favorite songs. I can still analyze “All the Things You Are” according to Babbitt, which in fact I did for my students at Oxford. Then we’d spend the rest of the time analyzing Beethoven and Mozart.

I asked him if he would teach me atonal music. He said, “There’s no point until you’ve exhausted tonal resources for yourself. You haven’t, have you?” I said, “No, and I suspect I’ll never want to.” So I never did study atonal music. He taught tonal as rigorously as Barrow did. It was a similar approach: Analyze the music, look at what the music is. How do you sustain something, hold a piece together for forty-five minutes if it’s a symphony, or three minutes if it’s a song? How do you manage time? That’s what he taught me.

Why did you hesitate when you were offered the chance to write the lyrics of West Side Story?

I wanted primarily to write music. But Oscar advised me that the job would be an extraordinary opportunity to work with men of such ability, talent, and imagination as Leonard Bernstein, Jerome Robbins, and Arthur Laurents. So I took it. And he was right.

I’ve heard you disparage your lyrics for West Side Story, but I would give a great deal to have written “oh, moon, grow bright and make this endless day endless night.”

It’s fine until you remember that it’s sung by an adolescent in a gang.

You’ve said, “I’ve always thought of lyric-writing as a craft rather than an art, largely a matter of sweat and time. Music is more challenging, more interesting, and more rewarding.” Do you still feel that way?

Sure. Because music's abstract and it's fun and it lives in you. Language is terrific, but the English language is a difficult tool to work with. Two of the hardest words in the language to rhyme are *life* and *love*. Of all words! In Italian, easy. But not English. Making lyrics feel natural, sit on music in such a way that you don't feel the effort of the author, so that they shine and bubble and rise and fall, is very, very hard to do. Whereas you can sit at the piano and just play and feel you're making art.

The *love* rhymes are *shove*, *above*, *dove*, *glove*, and *of*. That's all we've got.

And they're not easy to use. *Live* isn't easy, either. You have *give* and *sieve* and then you're in a lot of trouble.

The English language has forty-two sounds in it, French a dozen, so everything rhymes with everything else. That's why Molière was able to write those alexandrines, couplet after couplet, without ever straining for a rhyme.

But lyrics are also about open vowel sounds. The Italians have it all over us *and* the French because everything is *ahhhh!* Try to sing *me* on a high note. And *me* is a very useful word.

Or him.

Exactly. *Short* is terrible. Singers will tell you that their throats close up.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum was the first Broadway show for which you wrote music and lyrics and, if memory serves, when the show was out of town, you were out on the streets giving tickets away to get people into the theater.

It was a disaster out of town. It was directed by George Abbott, who was famous as a play doctor. We would stand in the back of the auditorium in New Haven and feel the discomfort of the audience; all the while we thought that what we were seeing was terrific. Finally, one evening George said, "I don't know what to do, you'd better call in George Abbott [sic]."

When we got down to Washington, we asked Jerome Robbins to come in and help. He said, "It's the opening number that's killing it. It's not telling them what the show's about. You've got to write a baggy-pants number." So I wrote this song called "Comedy Tonight." Jerry insisted, though, I don't want you to tell any jokes, let *me* tell the jokes. Very smart of him. That's why the lyric is so bland and dull—it's background for Jerry's pyrotechnics. It may be the best opening number ever put on the stage. The audience was so satisfied at the end of it that we thought, "Let's not do the rest of the show."

You once asked Oscar Hammerstein why he never wrote a sophisticated musical.

He said, "You mean something that takes place in penthouses?" I said, "yes." He said, "Because it doesn't interest me." Most people probably think that Oscar was a hayseed and sat on a porch all the time watching cattle turn into statues, but in fact he was an urban product, a New York boy, and very—well, urbane. Sharp tongue. Pointed wit.

Wonderful critic. It's just that urban stories were not what he wanted to write about. He wanted to write about so-called simplicities. He was a morality playwright. He wrote about everyman. And every time he tried to write something that was particularly urban or contemporary, it wasn't very good, as in *Me and Juliet* and parts of *Allegro*. He was sharp and smart, but he didn't feel it. That's why he didn't want to write about penthouses, and he was right.

But you certainly did in Company, a sophisticated New York penthouse story. It has been called a revolutionary musical. Was it a plotless show?

Yes, because it didn't begin as a musical. George Furth was an actor and was in therapy. His therapist suggested that it might be good for him to do some writing. So he wrote a series of one-act plays—playlets, really. A production had been set up but had fallen through, so he sent them to me and said, "I don't know what to do with these." I wrote back, "Let me send them to Hal Prince because he's very shrewd about this sort of thing. Maybe he can give you some advice." Hal said, "Why don't we make a musical out of them?" It seemed impossible because they were such disparate plays, and that made it intriguing. So George came east, we spent two or three weeks talking, and gradually the form of the show took shape. It came from the fact that in each playlet there were two people in a relationship and a third person who often acted as a catalyst. We realized that what the show should be about is the *third* person. So we invented the character of Bobby, the outsider in five different marriages. We realized that there could be no plot in the conventional sense. A man comes home on his thirty-fifth birthday and realizes that all his friends are married; he's an outsider. And he has a combination breakdown and epiphany. The show really takes place in one second. His friends are there but they're not there, and they don't know each other but they do know each other. They're all fragments of his conscious-



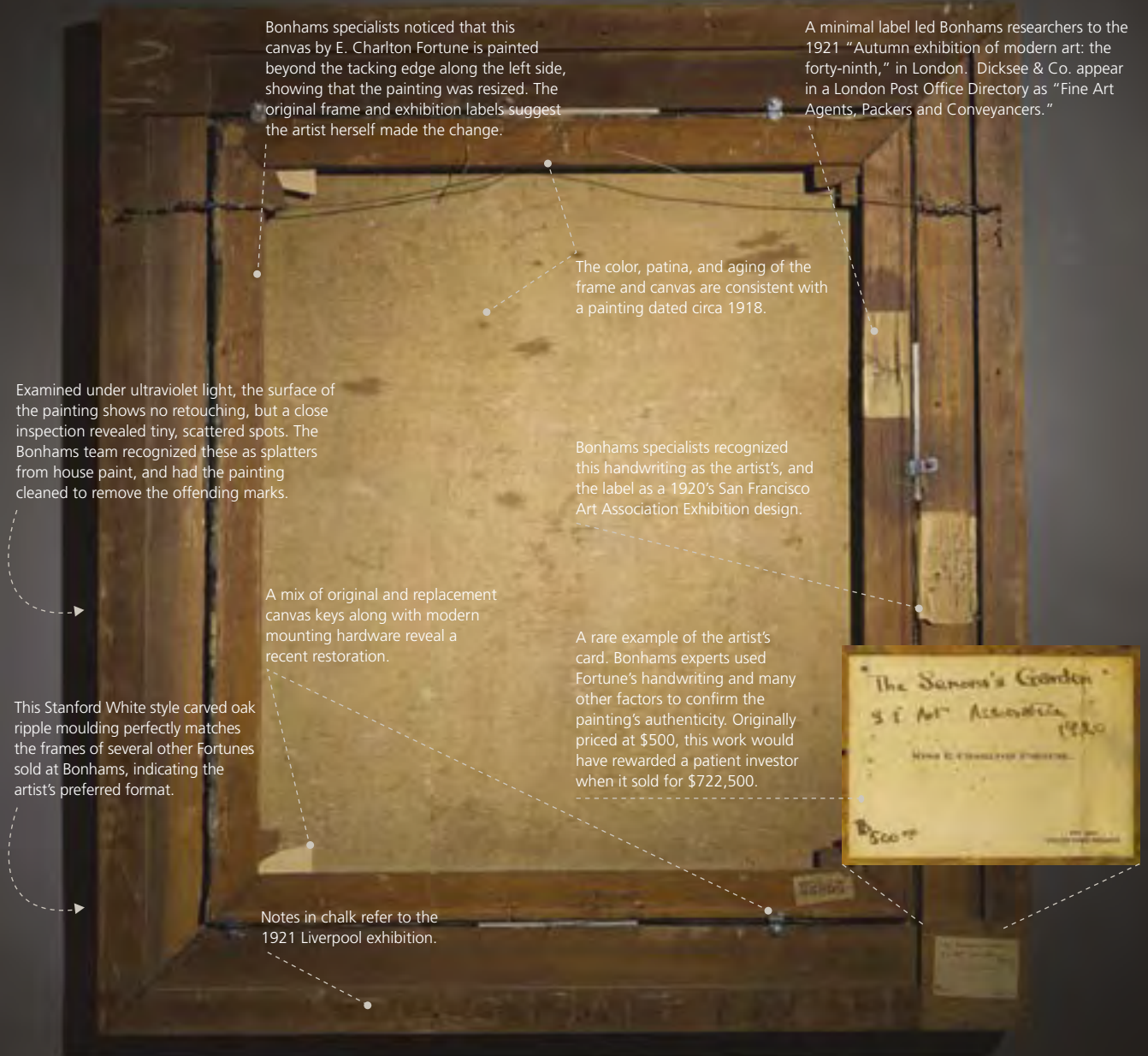
(Left to right) Stephen Sondheim, Leonard Bernstein, and Jerome Robbins reviewing *West Side Story*.

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The Senora's Garden, circa 1918
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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.

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ness. That's what made it an unusual show: it took place in a single moment of time. It wasn't a conventional narrative nor was it a revue, because each of the playlets concerned the same characters. Also, none of the songs grew out of scenes. Each of the songs was either a comment or the entire scene itself. And all the songs, with one exception, dealt with marriage or relationships—a word I don't much like, but I did in those days. So it became this kind of twilight-zone revue. That whole area between revue and book is something I've always been interested in. It surfaced in *Follies*, then again in *Pacific Overtures* and *Assassins*. And that's what was, to use your word, revolutionary—at least in the commercial musical theater.

There's a remarkable song in Company called "Barcelona" that's actually very well-written dialogue...

I'll tell you something funny about "Barcelona." I finished it the night before we went into rehearsal. Hal had been pushing me to get the April-Bobby song finished because it was an entire scene. So I wrote "Barcelona" and went up to his house and played it. He looked blank throughout the whole thing and said, "Well, look, we can do it at the read-through tomorrow, anyway." I thought, "Oh God." Then his wife Judy came in and asked if she could hear the new song. I said, "I'm afraid it's not quite...well, I'll play it anyway." I sang the opening line, "Where you going? / Barcelona," and she laughed. I thought, "All right, maybe it's got a chance." The next day, at the read-through, we get to "Barcelona" and I play and sing it. I sing the first line and the entire cast convulses with laughter. Hal looks over at me and shrugs. He has no trouble admitting he's wrong.

When Richard Rodgers was asked, "Which comes first, the music or the lyrics?" he usually replied, "The check." Since you're both the composer and lyricist, what do you start with?

Two basic things: some kind of accompaniment figure and/or some sort of refrain line or central idea for a lyric. Those are the two kinds of glue for a song. The trick is to keep them going together, so you don't get boxed in.

You've taken us all off the hook by admitting you use a rhyming dictionary. I think you and I use the same one, Clement Wood.

That's the best one, and for a very simple reason: all the words are listed vertically. If you use one that lists them horizontally, your eyes start to skip over the entries. The problem with Clement Wood is that it was published in 1938, so there are very few contemporary words in it. But I've written a lot of words into my main copy. The book was out of print for years but luckily, I'd bought four copies so I had them all over the place. Happily, it's now in print again. If anybody wants to write lyrics, that's the one to use.

The other thing that's essential is a thesaurus. Not a dictionary but a thesaurus, because you want to know what your choices are. There I also have a favorite, by Norman Lewis. It's a thesaurus in dictionary form. The way Roget arranged his thesaurus mystifies me.

But what's interesting about the Roget is that it opens your mind, because in doing the cross-referencing, when you start looking up



Stephen Sondheim (left) and his longtime collaborator James Lapine (right) attend the premiere of the HBO documentary Six By Sondheim in New York.

synonyms, you have to go back and forth, you come across shadings of words you hadn't thought of, which lead to other words. The problem with the Roget is that it's been in so many editions. The one that I think offers the best balance between the number of words and the number of cross-references is the 1943 edition. That may sound fussy but, as you know, you work with the same tools over a period of time and they become important.

I've heard you say that you don't like to work at the piano.

Well, if you work at the piano, you're limited by your own technique. I have a very good right hand, but a left hand like a ham hock. Also, muscle memory comes into it. You start playing the same chords, the same figurations. If you force yourself to write away from the piano, you come up with more inventive things. If you're too good a piano player, as some composers are, the music may become flavorless and glib. And if you're not a very good pianist, you're limited to the same patterns. I force myself to write in keys that I haven't written in for a while. I find that most composers consider sharp keys the enemy and flat keys the friends. Flat keys somehow are more welcoming. I often force myself to write in sharp keys just to get away from the pattern. I think it's very important to try to write away from the piano.

To read the entire interview, visit sfopera.com/sweeneytodd.

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 on the board of directors of Stanford Hospitals and Clinics. 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.

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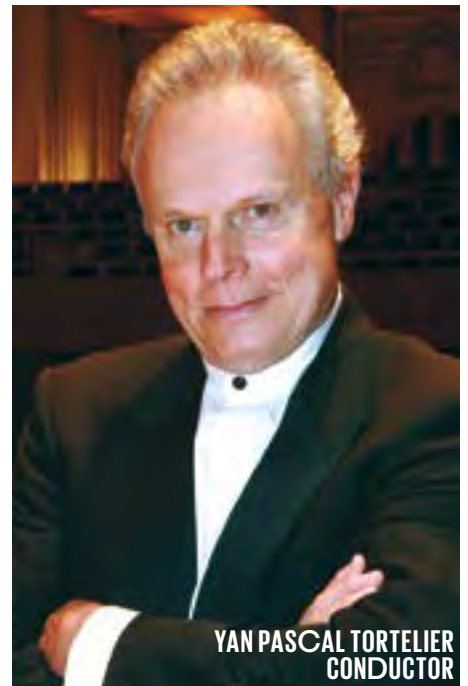
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Diane B. Wilsey (Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor, *Luisa Miller*)

Longtime San Francisco Opera Board member, patron and Opera Ball supporter, Dede Wilsey believes deeply in the transformative power of the arts, particularly the multi-faceted world of opera. Says Dede, “It’s a marvelous spectacle. From the voices and pageantry to the scenery, costumes, and acting, opera fills the senses and takes you to another place.” She also believes fervently that such experiences should be available to all. “We work hard to make events open to the public at no cost,” she explains. “And because a love of any art form starts at a young age, we take opera into the schoolroom.” Thanks to Dede’s generosity, opera enthusiasts of all ages have much to celebrate. As Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor for the tenth consecutive year, she is supporting the opening production of the 2015–16 Season, *Luisa Miller*; the celebratory floral arrangements that grace the War Memorial Opera House on September 11; and the free annual *Opera in the Park* concert at Sharon Meadow on September 13. Dede’s leadership support is also making possible the Opera’s creation of a dynamic, intimate new space at the Veterans Building, the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera, opening in Spring 2016. The Center will consolidate the Company’s activities onto the War Memorial Campus and will enable San Francisco Opera to engage in exciting new programming and education work. Dede’s philanthropic commitment to the community extends to many organizations. She is president of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; she serves on the boards of the San Francisco Ballet, Grace Cathedral, and the War Memorial. She a lifetime trustee of UCSF.

Koret Foundation (Production Sponsor, *Luisa Miller*)

San Francisco Opera is grateful to the Koret Foundation for its generous financial support of 14 mainstage productions, including *Luisa Miller*. The Opera is also indebted to the Foundation for helping to create the Company’s Koret/Taube Media Suite bringing OperaVision and simulcast programs to broader audiences, and for being the first private foundation funder of Orpheus, San Francisco Opera’s next generation initiative. Koret is particularly interested in innovative projects that strengthen the Bay Area and enrich our cultural landscape. “Koret is proud of its longstanding partnership with the Opera, whose continued innovation contributes to a strong, distinctive and culturally vibrant Bay Area,” says Jeffrey A. Farber, Koret CEO.



THOMAS HEINER

Dianne and Tad Taube (Production Sponsors, *Luisa Miller*)

“Tad and I are pleased to support San Francisco Opera’s production of *Luisa Miller*—an infrequently performed gem renowned for its brilliant musical portrayal of doomed romance and the unbreakable bond between father and daughter. We look forward to hearing the Opera’s former Adler Fellow and rising international star, Leah Crocetto, in the title role,” says Dianne Taube, a San Francisco Opera Board member since 2003. In partnership with the Koret Foundation, Dianne and Tad provided lead funding for the Opera’s Koret/Taube Media Suite, the first permanent high-definition, broadcast-standard facility installed in an American opera house. The Taubes are active philanthropists, providing significant cultural support to the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews (Warsaw); the Exploratorium; San Francisco Symphony; the San Francisco Zoo; and numerous academic institutions including Stanford University, the University of California, and the University of San Francisco. San Francisco Opera is deeply grateful to Dianne and Tad for their generous financial support of 14 mainstage productions, and for supporting the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera through their naming of the Atrium Theater.



DREW ALTIZER

DREW ALTIZER



Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem/ Conductors Fund and Emerging Stars Fund

**(Sponsors, Maestro Luisotti, Leah Crocetto and Michael Fabiano in *Luisa Miller*
and Heidi Stober and Brian Mulligan in *Sweeney Todd*)**

After a career devoted to his publishing businesses in Japan and Europe, the creation of Clos Pegase Winery, and his art collection, Jan Shrem, in joyous partnership with his wife Maria Manetti Shrem, is bringing his focus and affection to philanthropic causes that advance education and the performing and visual arts. Though they grew up half-a-world apart, Jan and Maria both developed a love of opera at a young age. While their lives led them each around the globe, their individual passions eventually led them to San Francisco Opera, and to each other. With the renewal of another generous 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.

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

DREW ALTIZER



Joan and David Traitel/Great Singers Fund

(Sponsors, Stephanie Blythe in *Sweeney Todd*)

“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

simply can’t stop at one. “There are so many! Stephanie Blythe is a mezzo-soprano superstar with such versatility and her comedic timing is fabulous. I can’t wait to see her as Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*. We are so pleased that the Fund can enable her 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.”



National Endowment for the Arts

(Production Sponsor, *Sweeney Todd*)

Sweeney Todd is supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The NEA was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$5 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. San Francisco Opera is grateful to the NEA for its long-time partnership and commitment to the work we do on stage.

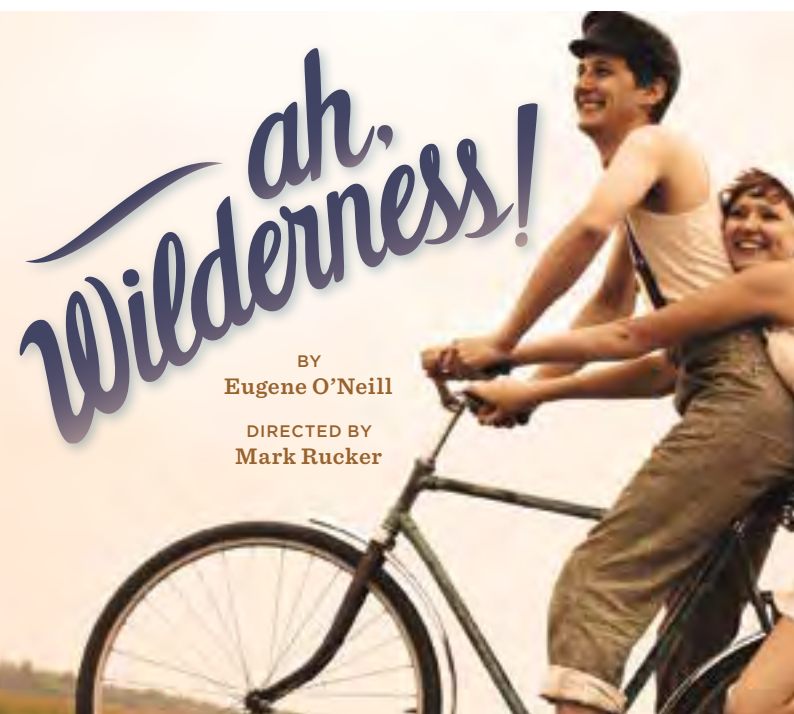
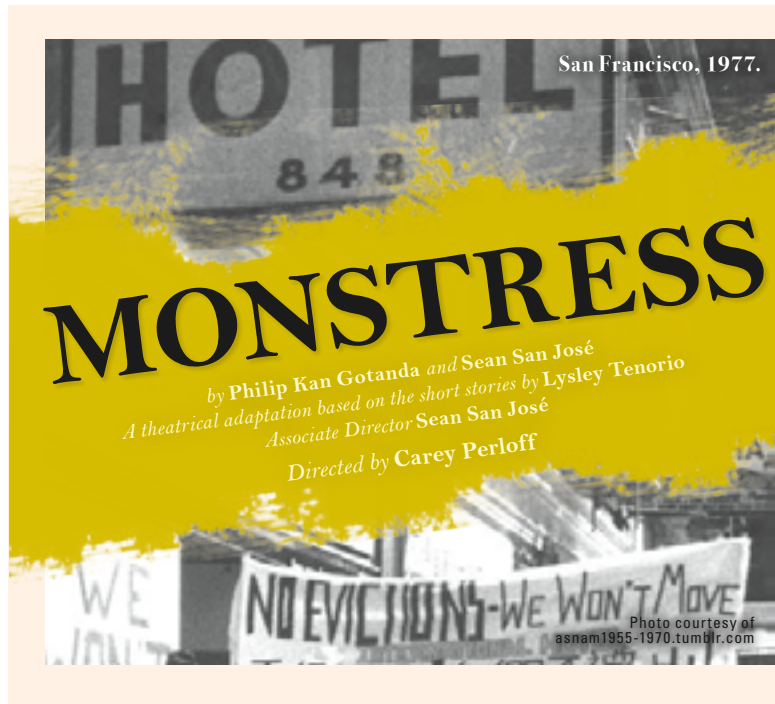
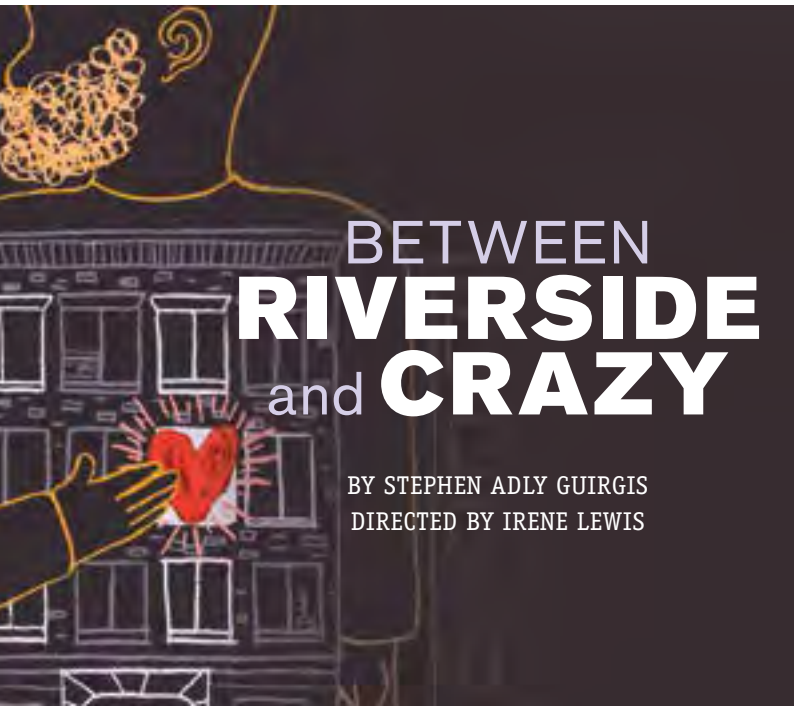
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**SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA REMEMBERS**
Nikolaus Lehnhoff

MATTHIAS CREUTZIGER



Prolific German stage director Nikolaus Lehnhoff passed away in August 2015. Lehnhoff's association with San Francisco Opera began in 1974 when he directed Wieland Wagner's production of *Salome*. Lehnhoff had been an assistant to Wieland Wagner (grandson of Richard Wagner) at the legendary Bayreuth Festival in Germany, and that lineage evidenced a thoughtful, intelligent, but never extreme sense of production values that was inspirational to so many of us in the business. Lehnhoff went on to conceive and direct some of the signature productions of this Company's storied history: *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in 1976, his own *Salome* in 1982, and, most significantly, the mighty *Ring* production that helped define this Company from 1983 when *Rheingold* was introduced until 1999 when his production received its third set of cycles. More recently, we were proud to produce his *Parsifal* in 2000 and his *The Flying Dutchman* in 2004. Lehnhoff was one of the individuals who most vividly shaped the aesthetic of this Company and many were inspired by him. 🌟

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Stephen Sondheim

Company Premiere

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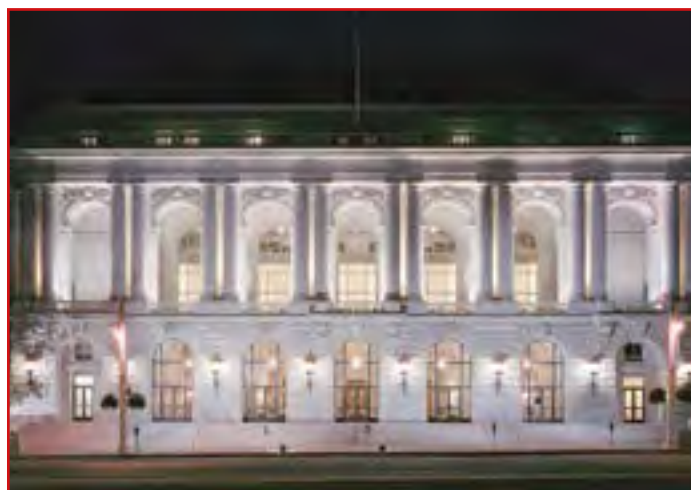
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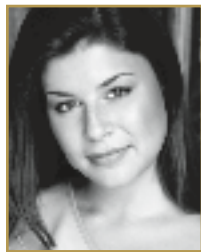
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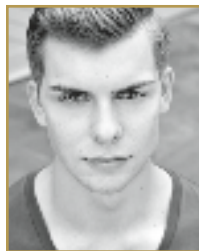
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SAN FRANCISCO
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LA PERLA



Stephen Sondheim

SWEENEY TODD

THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET: A MUSICAL THRILLER

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

David Gockley, General Director

Nicola Luisotti, Music Director
Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair



Company Sponsors John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn are proud to support *Sweeney Todd*.

This production is also made possible, in part, by Roberta & David Elliott.

Additional support is provided by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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

Ms. Blythe's appearance is made possible by a gift to the Great Singers Fund by Joan & David Traitel.

Additional support for this production is provided by Affiliate Sponsors, Dr. Susan Kroll & Mr. Mark R. Kroll.

San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges Meyer Sound, September 20 Performance Sponsor.

SWEENEY TODD

ACT I

A sailor, Anthony Hope, returns to London with Sweeney Todd, the man he rescued on the journey back from Australia. Todd seems unnerved by a beggar woman and by the London streets. He recounts the story of a barber and family whose lives were torn apart by a corrupt judge some fifteen years previously.

Continuing alone, Todd enters Mrs. Lovett's pie shop on Fleet Street to find out what happened to the barber's wife and child, Johanna. Mrs. Lovett recognizes him as Benjamin Barker, the barber from the story. She recalls how his wife Lucy was raped by Judge Turpin and subsequently poisoned herself, leaving the judge to adopt Johanna as his own. Todd swears to take revenge on the judge and his henchman, Beadle Bamford. Mrs. Lovett brings Todd his razors, which she has kept safe and encourages him to take up his old trade above her pie shop.

Anthony is passing by Judge Turpin's house when he catches sight of Johanna, whom the judge keeps virtually imprisoned. The beggar woman warns Anthony not to get involved with Johanna. Judge Turpin and Bamford catch Anthony and Johanna together. Anthony is advised again to leave Johanna alone.

The simple lad Tobias is hawking a miraculous hair tonic on behalf of the Italian barber Adolfo Pirelli. Todd challenges the Italian to a shaving contest with Bamford serving as judge. Todd wins easily, and Bamford is so impressed by Todd's skill that he promises to come in for a shave.

Meanwhile, a mixture of lust and guilt fills Judge Turpin as he spies on Johanna. He tells the horrified girl he intends to marry her himself in order to keep her safe.

At Todd's shop Mrs. Lovett encourages the barber to bide his time before his revenge. Pirelli arrives at the shop for a private word with Todd.

Having recognized Todd as Benjamin Barker, Pirelli tries to blackmail him. Todd panics and kills him.

Returning from court, the judge tells Beadle Bamford he intends to marry Johanna; elsewhere, Anthony and Johanna are making plans to elope. Bamford suggests a visit to Sweeney Todd for a shave before proposing.

In the barber's chair the judge reveals his passion for women as Todd prepares for revenge. Anthony rushes in revealing the elopement and distracting Todd. The judge leaves in anger. Overcome with rage at missing his opportunity, Todd swears to take his revenge on *all* men. Mrs. Lovett is struck by a practical idea of how to dispose of his victim's bodies and also increase her pie sales.

ACT II

Mrs. Lovett's pies are so improved that the shop is mobbed with customers; Tobias has been enlisted to help serve pies and keep the beggar woman away. Todd has a new barber chair that sends his victims directly to the bake-house.

Anthony searches for Johanna, who is in the lunatic asylum where the judge has placed her. Johanna dreams of the moment when Anthony will free her.

With business booming, Mrs. Lovett hopes of a future living on the coast and married to Todd.

Having found Johanna, Anthony brings the news to Todd. Todd sends Anthony to the asylum posing as a wigmaker in order to free Johanna and bring her to him. Todd writes an urgent letter to the judge telling him he will find Johanna and Anthony at the barber shop that evening.

Tobias has grown fond of Mrs. Lovett and promises to protect her. When Mrs. Lovett pulls out Pirelli's purse, he recognizes it. She says Todd gave it to her, which feeds Tobias's growing suspicions about Todd. She locks Tobias in the bake-house. Beadle Bamford comes by to investigate complaints about the odors coming from her chimney. When Todd returns, Bamford is offered a free shave. Tobias sees Bamford's body and tries to escape. Mrs. Lovett urges Todd to get rid of the boy.

Anthony succeeds in freeing Johanna and they arrive at the shop, with Johanna disguised as a sailor. While Anthony goes to hire a coach for their escape, she remains in the shop, hiding to avoid the beggar woman, who has come in to look for Beadle Bamford. When Todd returns and discovers the beggar woman, he impulsively kills her as he sees the judge returning. Todd suggests a shave for the judge before the reunion. Todd then reveals his true identity and kills him.

Johanna emerges from hiding and escapes Todd's razor. In the bake-house he finds Mrs. Lovett dragging the beggar woman to the oven. When Todd sees the body in the light, he realizes she is his wife, Lucy, and that Mrs. Lovett has deceived him. He pushes Mrs. Lovett into her own oven.

Tobias emerges from the cellar and kills Todd.

First performance: New York, Uris Theater, March 1, 1979.

Personnel: 10 principals, 32 choristers, 8 dancers and acrobats, 14 supernumeraries; **64 total**

Orchestra: 2 flutes, 1 piccolo, 1 oboe, 1 English horn, 2 clarinets, 1 bassoon, 1 horn, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, 2 percussion, 1 harp, 1 sampler Reduced (25) strings; **43 total**

Music and Lyrics by **Stephen Sondheim**
Book by **Hugh Wheeler** • From an Adaptation by **Christopher Bond**
Originally directed on Broadway by **Harold Prince** • Orchestrations by **Jonathan Tunick**
Originally Produced on Broadway by Richard Barr, Charles Woodward, Robert Fryer, Mary Lea Johnson, Martin Richards; in Association with Dean and Judy Manos

SWEENEY TODD

THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET: A MUSICAL THRILLER

(Sung in English with English supertitles)

Conductor

Patrick Summers

James Lowe* (9/29)

Director

Lee Blakeley*

Production Designer

Tanya McCallin*

Lighting Designer

Rick Fisher

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Sound Designer

Tod Nixon

Choreographer

Lorena Randi*

Dance Master

Lawrence Pech

Fight Director

Dave Maier

Assistant Conductor

Tyson Deaton*

Musical Preparation

**Matthew Piatt, Maureen Zoltek,
John Churchwell, Fabrizio Corona**

Assistant Stage Directors

Shawna Lucey

Morgan Robinson

Stage Manager

Lisa Anderson

Costume Supervisor

Christopher Verdosci

Wig and Makeup

Jeanna Parham

San Francisco Opera co-production with
Houston Grand Opera. This production
received its premiere at the Paris Théâtre
du Châtelet.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2015 AT 7:30PM

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 AT 7:30PM

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 AT 7:30PM

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 AT 2PM

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 AT 7:30PM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 AT 7:30PM

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 AT 7:30PM

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Sweeney Todd

Brian Mulligan

Anthony Hope

Elliot Madore*

Beggar Woman

Elizabeth Futral

Mrs. Lovett

Stephanie Blythe

Johanna

Heidi Stober

Bird Seller

James Asher

Tobias Ragg

Matthew Grills

Adolfo Pirelli

David Curry*

Beadle Bamford

AJ Glueckert

Judge Turpin

Wayne Tigges

Jonas Fogg

James Asher

Trio

Alan Cochran, Christopher Jackson,

Chester Pidduck

Quintet

Kathleen Bayler, Laurel Porter,

Chester Pidduck, Torlef Borsting,

William O'Neill

Ensemble

Kathleen Bayler, Michael Belle,

Torlef Borsting, Alan Cochran, Mary Finch,

Christopher Jackson, Claire Kelm,

Bojan Knežević, Sally Mouzon, Erin Neff,

William O'Neill, Philip Pickens,

William Pickersgill, Chester Pidduck,

Laurel Porter, Michael Rogers,

Carole Shaffer, Jere Torkelsen,

Richard Walker

Londoners, stevedores, industrialists, policemen

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: 1860s, London

ACT I

—INTERMISSION—

ACT II

*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 three hours.*

Stephen Sondheim, with typical clarity, quickly settled the relentless queries about how to classify his dazzling 1979 *Sweeney Todd*, “If it is performed on Broadway, it’s a musical; if you see it in an opera house, it’s an opera.” This handily-dispatched definition may not satisfy those few “theatrical-genre” border police, but it goes a long way for everyone else. Ultimately, the precision of how to shelve it in a library is far less important than its musical and theatrical impact, and on those terms, *Sweeney Todd* is one of the greatest works written for the musical stage.

both its daring moral parable of the 1970s and for the grandeur and inventiveness of its words and music, *Sweeney Todd*.

While 1970s commercial theater was a place for risk-taking composition and era-defining works, in the opera house it was a decade of immense transition. It was the height of the postwar arts boom, the last era of the great recording stars, an era when *Regietheater* (“director’s theatre”) was a rarity and in which singers, not scenery, were the focus; there was little new American opera. Now, forty years later, the two cultural worlds have melded, with the opera house seeing much bolder new work than would have ever been thought possible in the 1970s, and Broadway is the more creatively conservative arena. There have been wonderful exceptions, in terms of original musicals with major scores, like Adam Guettel’s soaring *The Light in the Piazza* or Jeanine Tesori’s touching *Fun Home*.

Sondheim’s dazzling linguistic abilities always threaten to overshadow his brilliance as a composer. And though the engine of Sondheim’s scores is words, *Sweeney Todd* is a story told through music. Each member of *Sweeney*’s family has an interlocking set of musical motives that dramatically binds them, each a variation of the Dies Irae theme we first hear in the opening ballad, “Swing your razor wide, Sweeney,” and the entire work grows organically from it. There is hope within the horror, and it is the soaring musical center of the piece: “Nothing’s gonna harm you, not while I’m around,” sings the simpleton Toby. Uniquely for this great horror story, he offers both warning and protection, and we believe him. 🍷

Patrick Summers serves as San Francisco Opera’s principal guest conductor and leads our current presentation of *Sweeney Todd*.

Attending the Tale

One of the most revered and honored men in the history of the arts in America, Stephen Sondheim inherits an absolutely unique pedigree: he is both a golden-era show-biz whiz kid and an avant-garde composer with a clear link to the Second Viennese School. In stories he has touchingly told throughout his life, Oscar Hammerstein II mentored him, acting as practically a surrogate father, and he claims to have learned more in one youthful afternoon of Hammerstein critiquing a musical he’d written than at any other time of his life. Sondheim grew up amidst the heady and then quite daring world of Rodgers and Hammerstein, which led him to his earliest professional work as lyricist for two iconic musicals: Jule Styne’s *Gypsy* and Leonard Bernstein’s *West Side Story*. Asked in 1982 what had given him the most satisfaction in his life, Sondheim replied, “It was when I picked up the *New York Times* one day...and the first sentence in the lead editorial said, ‘Everything is not coming up roses in South Vietnam,’ and I thought, ‘I’ve passed a phrase into the English language,’” referring to the stentorian Act One finale of *Gypsy* as sung by Ethel Merman, “Everything’s Coming up Roses.”

But his work as a lyricist was also frustrating, as he was hungry to compose music. He studied composition with the serialist Milton Babbitt, whom he credits with perfecting his ability to build large-scale pieces out of small musical memes, a quality that has given each of his scores a unique feeling of both emotional unity and intellectual polish. His collected works illuminate a diverse set of ideas, with a range that no theatrical composer has ever matched: freedom (*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*), political corruption (*Anyone Can Whistle*), modern urban relationships (*Company*), regrets of youthful decisions (*Follies* and *Merrily We Roll Along*), the dark side of fairy tales (*Into the Woods*), an homage to the operettas of Hammerstein’s youth (*A Little Night Music*), the complicated emotional life of an artist (*Sunday in the Park with George*) and even the opening of Japan to the West (*Pacific Overtures*). But the work with which he finished his most prolific and innovative decade remains unmatched for



Angela Lansbury and Len Cariou in rehearsal with Stephen Sondheim for the original cast recording.

Sweeney Todd



CORBIS

The tale of Sweeney Todd began in 1846, where the character first appeared in a serialized story, “The String of Pearls: A Romance,” in the penny dreadful *The People’s Periodical and Family Library*. An author was credited but it was likely a pseudonym for one or more authors. The story was first dramatized by George Dibdin Pitt four months after the first installment, and a few weeks before the final one. Various adaptations would follow regularly, including three films (two silent) and

Mark Eden Horowitz is senior music specialist at the Library of Congress where he has worked as archivist for the collections of manuscripts and papers of Irving Berlin, Leonard Bernstein, Vernon Duke, Oscar Hammerstein II, Jonathan Larson, Jascha Heifetz, Jerome Kern, Frederick Loewe, Cole Porter, Richard Rodgers, and Vincent Youmans, among others. Author of *Sondheim on Music*, he has taught courses in musical theater and Sondheim at Georgetown University and is contributing editor to *The Sondheim Review*.

Angela Lansbury and Len Cariou created the roles of Mrs. Lovett and Sweeney Todd in the premiere of the work.

even a ballet in 1959. But the direct source of the musical was an elegantly recrafted version by a young author and actor, Christopher Bond, in 1968 (he wrote the character of Tobias for himself). Bond used a combination of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Revenger’s Tragedy* to inform his plot and, as he admitted, “adapted the wit and wisdom of Brenda, the woman who ran the greengrocer’s shop opposite [his] house, for Mrs. Lovett’s ruminations upon life, death, and the state of her sex life.” The show proved popular and enjoyed several subsequent productions. One of these was in 1973 at the Theatre Royal Stratford in East London where one night’s audience included Stephen Sondheim—in London for the West End revival of *Gypsy* starring Angela Lansbury.

For the first time in his professional career, Sondheim immedi-

ately saw the musical possibilities in a work and initiated the process of obtaining the rights and convincing his collaborating director, Hal Prince, to take on the project with him. Although agreements were made, work on *Sweeney* did not begin until Sondheim wrote new songs for a revival of *Candide*, composed the film score for *Stavisky*, and wrote several songs for a musical adaptation of Aristophanes's *The Frogs* to be produced at Yale, and wrote the score for a new Broadway musical, *Pacific Overtures*.

When work began on *Sweeney*, Sondheim's plan was to, again for the first time, write not only the lyrics and music, but the text as well. Using Bond's script as his guide he began his adaptation which went unusually easily until he realized: "Christopher Bond's entire play was thirty-five pages long in acting form, and I was only up to page three—or something like that—and the show was twenty minutes long. The point was it was going to turn out to be the *Ring* if I didn't cut it down." So librettist, Hugh Wheeler—who had collaborated with Sondheim on *A Little Night Music* and was British—was brought on board to help with the script.

With renewed confidence, the show almost seemed to write itself until Sondheim got to the moment toward the end of the

first act that would become the "Epiphany." In Bond's script the moment where Sweeney turns from seeking revenge on the Judge and Beadle who wronged him to the whole human race is justified in these few brief lines: "Revenge? Oh, no! The work's its own reward. For now I find have a taste for blood and all the world's my meat." It was the one moment in the script that Sondheim found unbelievable. Where it would typically take him about two weeks to write a song the length of "Epiphany," in this case it took him a month to work out the justification and how Sweeney would express it. The solution finds Sweeney's madness as a kind of schizophrenia—alternating from his "fury at the world ... his yearning for his dead wife ... and frustration at just having been cheated of his revenge"—and an imagined revelation that this cleansing of the world was his calling. The number is helped by a combination of musical themes—a romantic one to express his yearning for his wife, a relentless march to fortify his mission, and the Dies Irae hidden in the bass that adds a religious and funereal aspect. After that, the rest of the writing flowed.

Sweeney Todd began previews in New York's mammoth Uris Theater (given the size of the show, an out-of-town tryout was

Our current presentation is a co-production with Houston Grand Opera that received its premiere at the Paris Théâtre du Châtelet.



LYNN LANE

impractical) on February 6, 1979. It was the first major collaboration by Prince and Sondheim in which Prince wasn't also a producer. (*Sweeney* was actually one of the first shows on Broadway to sport a laundry list of producers— five producers, three associate producers, and some 271 investors to reach the \$1.3 million production cost.) *Sweeney* opened on March 1 and, while almost all the reviewers found details to cavil about and had opinions to show off, they all seemed to recognize how extraordinary the work was. Clive Barnes described the score as the “most distinguished to grace Broadway in years.” And Richard Eder writing for the *Times* wrote: “There is more artistic energy, creative personality and plain excitement in *Sweeney Todd* than in a dozen average musicals.” The show was nominated for nine Tonys and won eight, including for “Best Musical” and “Best Score.” Still with 557 performances, the show did not make back its investment.

But that's just the beginning of the story. Since its original Broadway production, *Sweeney* has become, not just a recognized classic, but one of the most frequently produced musicals ever and in a dizzying variety of styles and venues. It's hard to keep track, but there already seem to have been seven major productions in London, a Broadway and an off-Broadway revival, a film, two concert versions shown on television, and, most recently, a prog-metal (progressive metal—a subgenre of both progressive rock and heavy metal) version. There are at least seven recordings of productions, including one in Catalanian and one in German, not to mention two jazz instrumental versions. The show is not only produced around the world, and in regional theaters, it's become something of a staple in colleges and even high schools (in a mildly edited version). Which brings me to *Sweeney Todd* the opera.

In 1984, five years after *Sweeney* opened on Broadway, it was produced by both Houston Grand Opera and New York City Opera. Now, according to OPERA America, of all the works composed by an American, *Sweeney* is the fifth most frequently produced by their members, with twenty-four productions between 1990 and 2014. (*Amahl and the Night Visitors* is first, but clearly that doesn't count as it is a Christmas show, akin to the *Nutcracker*; the next three are *Porgy and Bess*, *Susannah*, and *Candide*.) In the U.K., productions have been licensed at Opera North, the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and Welsh National Opera; and in Iceland and Sweden; as well as in Graz and the Vienna Volksoper in Austria.

Sweeney Todd is a breathtaking score—rich, atmospheric, romantic, complex, dripping with great melodies, heart-stopping harmonies, and as varied as it is of a piece. In one sense, it's Sondheim's most ambitious score—with at least twenty-five discreet numbers, plus reprises—solos, duets (one that includes whistling and humming), trios, quartets, choral numbers, combinations of these, and both songs and arias with musical influences, ranging from British music hall, to Britten, Stravinsky, and the film composer Bernard Herrmann in particular.

Film music was Sondheim's first musical love—before classical and Broadway. As he puts it, “At the age of ten I was more a fan of Korngold than of Kern, more of Steiner than of Richard Strauss.” His love of Herrmann—who also scored *Citizen Kane* and would become best known for his collaborations with Hitchcock, includ-

ing *Vertigo* and *Psycho*—began with the 1945 Edwardian melodrama, *Hangover Square*. The main character is a composer who (like Sweeney) has a mental breakdown, and the film ends with him playing his “Concerto Macabre,” as the concert hall burns around him. A fifteen-year-old Sondheim stayed through the film twice, just to memorize the first page of that score that appears only briefly on the screen, and then wrote a fan letter to Herrmann.

The Herrmann influence is both general and specific. Not only are some of the numbers reminiscent of a Herrmann sound, in Sondheim's sketches for the show there's a particular chord that he describes as the “Sweeney chord,” which is a chord he took directly from Herrmann who used it frequently. As it happens, although that chord does end up in the score, what would ultimately become the “Sweeney chord” that is wed through the entire score, is slightly different. It's a minor chord with a major seventh, but inverted so the seventh is in the bass. This chord is not only shocking and frightening, but also unsettling, because these characteristics typically don't go together.

In fact, the whole score of *Sweeney* is infused with unsettling musical moments. Even the opening ballad that's reprised throughout the show, despite its mostly diatonic and memorable melody, has a rumbling undercurrent that quickens the pulse. Even though there's not a single accidental in the melody or harmony of the first seventeen measures, there are little surprises and clashes that keep the listener on edge. Throughout Sondheim's music, but particularly evident in *Sweeney* in particular, Sondheim tries to imbue his music with details that prevent the listener from getting too far ahead of where the music's going. Sometimes it's as simple as unusual meters, “Ladies in their Sensitivities,” or unexpected changes in accompaniment, such as the strums under “My Friend” that occur, initially, at seven-beat intervals. There's that extraordinary, almost jazz-like, chord in “Johanna,” first heard in “Satisfied enough to *dream* you,” that after countless hearings still sends chills up my spine. To be clear, these things are never arbitrary; Sondheim always has reasons. He's also meticulous in setting his lyrics so they sing naturally—the inflections reflecting a kind of heightened speech. And should the next note in a phrase be stepwise motion or go up a third, or have a more dramatic leap to best fit what the character is trying to say and which words, or even syllables, should be emphasized in any given sentences? It's also worth noting that among the various themes heard throughout the score, one, heard early on, provides a clue to the careful listener to the surprise identity of one of the characters.

The relationship between music and lyric is another area where Sondheim is unusually adept. In “Green Finch and Linnett Bird,” the accompaniment features subtle changes to the harmony, the tiny drop of a single note in the harmony at the very end of most measures. When asked about it, Sondheim expounds: “...there's a little dying fall at the end of each of these things—so the phrases have a little yearning and a little leaning ... it's knowing that this is a girl [Johanna] who is yearning for something. So this is characterizing by music. It's very hard to talk about how you musicalize character. When people talk about characterization in song, they're really talking about lyrics most of the times. It's rare—I mean we could sit down with a Puccini score, and I swear he knows how to

characterize musically—but there are not many composers who know how to characterize musically.” Sondheim is among them.

As gorgeous, sophisticated, and breathtaking as Sondheim’s music is, it’s that in combination with his lyrics that set him apart. In the world of opera, composers who write their own librettos are rare, but not unheard of. (Wagner and Berlioz come to mind; they’re more common in the world of musical theater, where the list includes George M. Cohan, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Frank Loesser, Harold Rome, Jerry Herman, and Stephen Schwartz.) But Sondheim is a great lyricist in two ways: his lyrics can be clever, witty, funny, moving, character-derived, thought-provoking, poetic, and include brilliant rhymes as good or better than any lyricist in history; but he is also a dramatist with his lyrics—there are theatrical reasons for all of his songs, characters evolve and change within songs, they reflect layers of understanding, they make things explicable, they justify behaviors, they manipulate the audience, and they provide subtext to the actors— not necessarily all at the same time.

Focusing on one number from *Sweeney*, “A Little Priest” features a lyric that is as delicious as its notion is distasteful. Who else but Sondheim could come up with lines as brilliant as:

Then again, there’s sweep
If you want it cheap
And you like it dark.
Or:
It’s fop.
Finest in the shop.
And we have some shepherd’s pie
peppered
With actual shepherd
On top.

As for Sondheim’s craft and effort, he wrote more than sixty pages of lyric sketches for that one number. In the margins he made lists of all the professions he considered that could be baked into meat pies. 158 in total. (Among those he considered was “rabbi.” He even tried it out in a couplet: “Everybody shaves except/Rabbis and riff-raff.”) But more importantly, the song cements the relationship between Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett; it puts their plans in motion; it entertains the audience (particularly after the frightening “Epiphany”) and sends them out on a high at the end of the first act. But I’d argue that the single most important thing it does is: the opening of the song has Mrs. Lovett going on for twenty-five measures, hinting subtly and not so subtly that, rather than waste Pirelli’s body, they could use him in the pies. The audience is several measures ahead of Sweeney, practically on the verge of screaming out to him. The result is that they’ve come up with the idea before Sweeney gets it and before Mrs. Lovett has actually proposed it. They’re complicit. So they have no right to be shocked and outraged when the idea becomes explicit.



Stephen Sondheim in 1976.

CORBIS

It may be surprising to some that Sondheim is not a particular fan of opera. This may be his most fulsome explanation: “I have successfully avoided enjoying opera all my life. There are many moments in the operatic literature that thrill me, but few complete scores, and even those (*Carmen*, *Peter Grimes*, *Wozzeck*, *Porgy and Bess*, most of Puccini, to list the ones that come to mind immediately) I would rather listen to on records because they strike me as way too long. I was brought up on the swiftness and insubstantiality of musicals and I’m not as enthralled by the human voice as I should be. For me it’s always the song, not the singer...The thing that puts me off most is that most opera composers seem to have no sense of theater. They spend as much time having their characters sing about trivialities as about matters of emotional importance, and they resort to recitative to carry the plot along—for my money a tedious and arid solution to a problem easily solved by dialogue.” With *Sweeney*, Sondheim had the opportunity to write something close to an opera that would allow him to put his beliefs into practice. There is far more dialogue in *Sweeney* than most people realize. One of the reasons *Sweeney feels* sung-through is that there is almost constant underscoring.

But enough of labels. Enough of pontificating and explaining. Whatever it is, however it was written, *Sweeney Todd* is a masterpiece and the thing to do is to enjoy it. 🍷

Sweeney Todd's Dreadful Origins

He kept a shop in London Town
Of fancy clients and good renown
And what if none of their souls were saved?
They went to their maker impeccably shaved.
—“The Ballad of Sweeney Todd”

A modern audience might think *Sweeney Todd* is the product of Stephen Sondheim’s fertile—perhaps disturbed—imagination. But in fact the demon barber of Fleet Street, who famously slit the throats of his clientele as they relaxed in the barber’s chair, is a character who has been haunting our collective imagination for almost two centuries. Is he factual or fictional? Some historians have argued that Todd really existed.

Crime historian Peter Haining, author of *Sweeney Todd: The Real Story of the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (1993), ploughed through all available evidence for twenty-five years and became convinced of Todd’s existence, noting reports in a periodical called *The Newgate Calendar*, and adding, “It is simply all too gruesome not to be true.”

But the playwright Christopher Bond, whose 1973 work was adapted by Sondheim, disagreed. He begins his tale by telling readers: “Sweeney Todd is pure fiction ... No one has ever succeeded in finding a shred of evidence as to the existence of a demon barber.”

The debate continues, but what we know for certain is that the characters of Sweeney Todd and his accomplice, the meat-pie-making seductress Mrs. Lovett, were first seen in print in 1846, in *The String of Pearls: A Romance*. The 18-part weekly series was published in *The People’s Periodical and Family Library*—an ironically G-rated title for a publication that printed an unending stream of penny dreadfuls, a pejorative term that referred to a salacious and cheap popular serial, each part costing one penny.

The subject matter of these serials was typically sensational, focusing on the exploits of detectives, criminals, or supernatural entities. *The String of Pearls* was a perfect example: with violent, salacious subject matter and enough gore to keep young Brits awake at night.

Yes, in mid-1800s England, penny dreadfuls were as much a rage as smart phones are today. Why their rise in popularity? Blame it entirely on modernization.

Victorian Britain witnessed a soaring increase in literacy rates. And with the rise of capitalism and industrialization, people began to spend more money on entertainment, contributing to the popularization of the novel. Reading became, perhaps for the first time, an escapist pursuit. Add to this, improvements in printing, and an increased capacity for distribution via the expansion of the railway system, and you had a sure-fire market for cheap popular literature.

The tawdry subject matter also spun from the rise in crime rates that corresponded with industrialization. The immense pop-

ularity of the Sweeney Todd serial was certainly the result of the public’s fascination with and fear of violence: the paranoia of what could happen in the hornet’s nest of big city. And, although there is no bylined author of the original *String of Pearls* (most likely pulp-fiction scribes James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest), one could see where the story might develop.

During that era, it was not uncommon to find a shop boasting a barber-surgeon. This was someone who was a medical practitioner—not through school but through apprenticeship—despite often being illiterate. In front of a barber-surgeon’s workplace would be a red and white pole (much like in front of Sweeney Todd’s shop), symbolizing the blood and napkins used during the bloodletting. (Thankfully, the dubious practice was ended in 1745, when King George II officially separated the two professions.)

The penny dreadful version of *The String of Pearls* was published in book form in 1850 with the subtitle *The Barber of Fleet Street, A Domestic Romance*. This expanded version of the story was 732 pages long. The first recorded live theater performance influenced by *The String of Pearls* was “Mrs. Lovett,” performed in 1847, the same year the penny dreadful story was published. This adaptation reflects the popularity of the penny dreadful story since it was performed so quickly after the story’s original publication.

The demon barber’s first cinematic appearance was in a silent film in the 1920s and he soon got speaking lines in a serious horror film, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, in 1936. In 1979 Stephen Sondheim adapted *The String of Pearls* into a musical. Unlike most incarnations, the musical portrays Sweeney Todd as a tragic figure with his primary vice being revenge instead of greed. The show opened on March 1, 1979, in the Uris Theater and had a total of 557 shows until it closed on June 29, 1980. One of the early reviews called the show “one giant step towards vegetarianism.”

Our fascination with the demon barber remains more avid than ever.

As journalist Anna Pavord penned in *The Observer* in 1979: “Sweeney Todd will never die. We all need bogeymen and he was bog-ier than most.” 🍷

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 *Bazaar* to *Rolling Stone*, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, and *San Francisco Opera Magazine*.



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ARTIST PROFILES



PATRICK SUMMERS

(Washington, Indiana)

Conductor

Principal Guest Conductor for San Francisco Opera, Patrick Summers has

led a vast repertory for the Company, including *Ariodante*; *Samson et Dalila*; *Iphigénie en Tauride*; *Il Trittico*, *Xerxes*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*; the world premieres of André Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1998), Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* (2000), and Christopher Theofanidis and Donna Di Novelli's *Heart of a Soldier* (2011); the West Coast premiere of Heggie's *Three Decembers* (2008); and Heggie's *Moby-Dick* (2012). Summers has twice received Merola Opera Program's Otto Guth Award and was named its "Distinguished Alumnus" in 2001. Summers has conducted at the world's preeminent opera companies, including the Metropolitan Opera, Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, Lisbon Opera, Bordeaux Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Bregenz Festival, Welsh National Opera, Opera Australia, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and the Dallas Opera. Other world premieres include Previn's *Brief Encounter* at Houston Grand Opera and Paul Moravec's *The Letter* at the Santa Fe Opera. As Houston Grand Opera's Artistic and Music Director, Summers has overseen many of that company's important artistic advances, including the formation of the Houston Grand Opera Orchestra. During his tenure, he has supervised and conducted seven world premieres as well as many seminal opera works not previously mounted by the company. In 2015 his assignments for San Francisco Opera include conducting *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.



JAMES LOWE

(Batavia, New York)

Conductor

Making his San Francisco Opera debut in 2015, James Lowe conducts *Sweeney Todd*, which

he recently led at Houston Grand Opera. Other career highlights include *Oklahoma!* with Lyric Opera of Chicago; Catan's *Florenca en el Amazonas* and Floyd's *Of Mice and Men* for Utah Opera; *Camelot* at the Glimmerglass Festival; the world-premiere productions of Portman's *The Little Prince* and Heggie's *The End of the Affair* at Houston Grand Opera, in addition to *Carmen*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for that company; and Adamo's *Little Women* at Lyric Opera Cleveland in a production directed by the composer. Lowe served as the music director and conductor of the recent Broadway production of *Anything Goes*, which received the 2011 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical, and was the musical supervisor for the national tour of that production. He was nominated for a Grammy Award for his work on the *Anything Goes* cast album, which he conducted and co-produced. His other work as a music director and conductor on Broadway includes a new production of *Les Misérables* as well as *Gypsy* starring Patti LuPone.



BRIAN MULLIGAN

(Endicott, New York)

Sweeney Todd

American baritone Brian Mulligan made his San Francisco Opera debut as Marcello

(*La Bohème*) with Maestro Nicola Luisotti in 2008 and has since returned as Valentin (*Faust*), Albert (*Werther*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), the

King's Herald (*Lohengrin*) and as the title role in *Nixon in China*. He returned in 2014 as Count Anckarström (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), as well as Marcello, and he recently appeared as Chorèbe (*Les Troyens*) with Maestro Donald Runnicles during the summer of 2015. In San Francisco Opera's 2015-16 season he appears in the title roles of Debussy's *La Chute de la Maison Usher* and Getty's *Usher House*, as well as Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*). Brian has recently appeared as Amfortas (*Parsifal*) and Prospero (Adès's *The Tempest*) both at Oper Frankfurt; Yeletsky (*The Queen of Spades*) with Jiří Bělohlávek at Opernhaus Zürich; *Carmina Burana* with Gustavo Dudamel at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, André Thorel (Massenet's *Thérèse*) at Wexford Festival Opera; Peter (*Hänsel und Gretel*) with Lyric Opera of Chicago; Enrico with Canadian Opera Company, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Washington National Opera; the title role of *Hamlet* with Minnesota Opera; and Amonasro (*Aida*) and Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*) both at the Aspen Music Festival. Other recent engagements include Valentin at the Metropolitan Opera with conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin; the title role of *The Death of Klinghoffer* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis; Prometheus (*Die Vögel*) at Los Angeles Opera; Marcello at Houston Grand Opera and New York City Opera; Ford (*Falstaff*) at Japan's Saito Kinen Festival with Seiji Ozawa; and the title role in *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Houston Grand Opera, and at the Ravinia Festival. Upcoming engagements include Paolo Albiani (*Simon Boccanegra*) at the Metropolitan Opera with James Levine; creating the role of Jack Torrance in the world premiere of Paul Moravec's *The Shining* at Minnesota Opera; Yeletsky at Opernhaus Zürich; and John Proctor in a new production of *The Crucible* by Francesca Zambello at the Glimmerglass Festival.



STEPHANIE BLYTHE

(Ellenville, New York)

Mrs. Lovett

One of the most highly respected artists of her

generation, mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2009 as a soloist in the Verdi Requiem and returned that year as Azucena (*Il Trovatore*). She previously performed with San Francisco Opera at the 2007 Stern Grove Festival. Blythe has sung in many of the renowned opera houses across the United States and Europe, including the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Paris Opera, and Seattle Opera. Her broad repertoire includes the title roles of *Carmen*, *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, *Tancredi*, *Orfeo*, *Giulio Cesare*, and *L'Italiana in Algeri*; Frugola, the Princess, and Zita (*Il Trittico*), Dalila (*Samson et Dalila*), Fricka in both *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Ulrica (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), Baba the Turk (*The Rake's Progress*), Jocasta (*Oedipus Rex*), Mère Marie (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), Mistress Quickly (*Falstaff*), Ježibaba (*Rusalka*), and Prince Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*). Recent engagements include creating the role of Gertrude Stein in the world premiere of Gordon's *27* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Fricka (*Der Ring des Nibelung*) with the Met and Seattle Opera, Baba the Turk with the Met, Azucena with Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Ino and Juno (*Semele*) with Seattle Opera. Equally active on the concert stage, she has performed with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's, among others. Blythe's solo recordings include a collection of works by Mahler, Brahms, and Wagner as well as an album of Handel and Bach arias—all released on the Virgin Classics label, and her first crossover recording, *As Long As There Are Songs*, on the Innova label. Blythe's many engagements this season include

performances of *Sing, America!*, her sing-a-long recital, in Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium as well as the Harris Theater in Chicago. She will also make her Houston Opera debut as Nettie in *Carousel*. Ms. Blythe was named *Musical America's* Vocalist of the Year for 2009. Her other awards include the 2007 Opera News Award and the 1999 Richard Tucker Award. Following her *Sweeney Todd* engagement, Blythe will make her Bay Area Cabaret debut with her show *We'll Meet Again: The Songs of Kate Smith* at the Fairmont's Venetian Room.



HEIDI STOBER

(Waukesha, Wisconsin)

Johanna

Heidi Stober made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2010 as Sophie

(*Werther*) and has since returned as Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Atalanta (*Xerxes*), Pamina (*The Magic Flute*), Nannetta (*Falstaff*), Magnolia Hawks (*Show Boat*), and Oscar (*Un Ballo in Maschera*). The American soprano's recent engagements include Oscar, Pamina, and Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) with the Metropolitan Opera; Pamina, Susanna, Gretel, Adina (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), and Micaëla (*Carmen*) with Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Sandrina (*La Finta Giardiniera*) and Zdenka (*Arabella*) with the Santa Fe Opera. A principal artist with Deutsche Oper Berlin, her other engagements with that company have included Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Oscar, Ninette (*L'Amour des Trois Oranges*), Ascagne (*Les Troyens*), and Roggiero (*Tancredi*). Stober is a graduate of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, and her credits there include Musetta (*La Bohème*), Atalanta, Blonde (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Norina (*Don Pasquale*), Susanna, The Rose (Portman's *The Little Prince*), and La China in the world premiere of Catán's *Salsipuedes*. Other career highlights include *La Folie* and Thalie (*Platée*), Tigrane (*Radamisto*), Musetta, and Ada Leverson in the world premiere of Morrison's *Oscar* with the Santa Fe Opera; Ada Leverson

with Opera Philadelphia; Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*) with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; Poppea (*Agrippina*) with New York City Opera; Morgana (*Alcina*) in Santiago, Chile; Aminta (*Il Re Pastore*) with Opera Theatre of St. Louis; and Leïla (*Les Pêcheurs de Perles*) at Opera Colorado. Upcoming engagements in the 2015–2016 season include Valencienne (*The Merry Widow*) at Lyric Opera of Chicago; Susanna at Houston Grand Opera; Pamina, Adina, and Micaëla (*Carmen*) with Deutsche Oper Berlin; and the title role of *Alcina* and Micaëla in Dresden.



ELIZABETH FUTRAL

(Johnston County, North Carolina)

Beggar Woman

Since her San Francisco Opera debut creating the role of Stella

Kowalski in André Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 1998, American soprano Elizabeth Futral's other Company successes include the title role of *La Traviata* (2009) and originating the role of Vera Donovan in Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne* (2013). Recent career highlights include creating the role of Alice B. Toklas in Ricky Ian Gordon's *27* at Opera Theatre of St. Louis; the title role of Saariaho's *Émilie* at the Lincoln Center and Spoleto USA Festivals; Violetta at Washington National Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and San Diego Opera; Zdenka (*Arabella*) at Minnesota Opera; Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) with Washington National Opera; the title role of *Thaïs* in Athens and Santiago, Chile; and the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Portland Opera. No stranger to contemporary opera, she created the role of Laura Jesson in Previn's *Brief Encounter* at Houston Grand Opera in 2009, and in 2006 she originated the role of Princess Yueyang in Tan Dun's *The First Emperor* at the Metropolitan Opera. Other notable engagements include the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Elvira (*I Puritani*), and Princess Eudoxie (Halévy's *La Juive*) at the Metropolitan Opera; Adina (*L'Elisir d'Amore*) and Gilda (*Rigoletto*) at

Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu; Thaïs at English National Opera; Violetta and the title role of Handel's *Partenope* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; Gilda at La Monnaie in Brussels; Nannetta (*Falstaff*) and Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) in Munich; and the title roles of *Semele*, *Daphne*, and *The Ballad of Baby Doe* at New York City Opera. Futral's extensive discography includes Meyerbeer's *L'Étoile du Nord* (Marco Polo); *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (DG); Glass's *Hydrogen Jukebox* (Euphobia); Rossini's *Otello* and *Zelmira* as well as Pacini's *Carlo di Borgogna* (Opera Rara); Gordon's *Orpheus and Euridice* (Ghostlight); also *Lucia di Lammermoor* and a solo recital recording entitled *Great Opera Arias* (Chandos). Upcoming engagements include the title role of *The Merry Widow* at Lyric Opera of Chicago and creating the role of Hester Prynne in the world premiere of *The Scarlet Letter* with Opera Colorado.

(*The Enchanted Island*) with the Met; Ramiro (*L'Heure Espagnole*) and the Cat/Grandfather Clock (*L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*) at the Glyndebourne and Saito Kinen festivals; and Schaunard with Opera Colorado. In addition to the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Madore was the recipient of the 2010 George London Award for a Canadian Singer from the George London Foundation, a finalist in the 2010 Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers in Houston and the

recipient of the ARIAS Emerging Young Artist Award from Opera Canada. He was also the winner of the 2009 Palm Beach Vocal Competition.

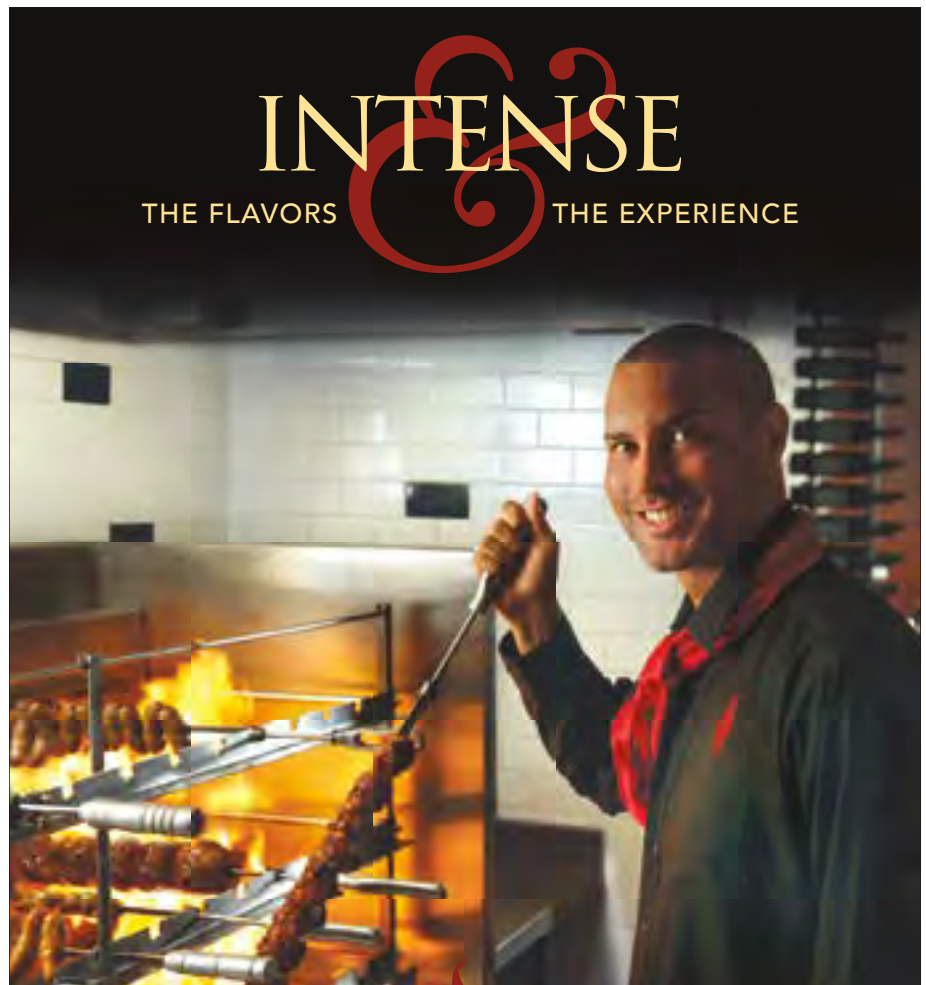


MATTHEW GRILLS
(Newtown, Connecticut)
Tobias Ragg
A winner of the 2012 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions



ELLIOT MADORE
(Toronto, Canada)
Anthony Hope
A winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Canadian baritone

Elliot Madore makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Anthony Hope in *Sweeney Todd*. His recent engagements include Pelléas (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) with Munich's Bavarian State Opera and Croatian National Opera, Prince Hérison de Porc-Epic (Chabrier's *L'étoile*) at Dutch National Opera; Harlekin (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) in Zurich, and Adario (Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes*) with Les Arts Florissants in Paris. As an ensemble member with Zurich Opera, his roles with that company have included Valentin (*Faust*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Schaunard (*La Bohème*), Andrei (Eötvös's *Three Sisters*), Silvio (*Pagliacci*), Silvano (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), and Germano (*La Scala di Seta*). Other career highlights include the title role of *Don Giovanni* with Opera Philadelphia, the Glyndebourne Festival, and Opera Theatre of St. Louis; Lysander



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and the Lotte Lenya Competition, tenor Matthew Grills made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2013 as Nathanaël (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) and returned later that year as Count Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville for Families*). His recent engagements include Nemorino (*L'Elisir d'Amore*) with Portland Opera, Fenton (*Falstaff*) with Wolf Trap Opera, Pedrillo (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and the title role of *Le Comte Ory* at Munich's Cuvilliés Theatre. Grills spent two years as a young artist with the Bavarian State Opera through a scholarship awarded by the Opera Foundation. He was also a young artist with Portland Opera, Wolf Trap Opera and Santa Fe Opera, where he performed the role of Frank Harris in a workshop of Morrison's *Oscar*. In 2013 he was presented in recital by the Vocal Arts D.C. and the Washington Performing Arts Society at the Kennedy Center. He holds a master's degree from the Eastman School of Music and a bachelor's degree from the Boston Conservatory. Other credits include Goffredo (*Rinaldo*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Prunier (*La Rondine*), Jenik (*The Bartered Bride*), and Jamie in Jason Robert Brown's *The Last Five Years*. Grills will join the ensemble of the Bavarian State Opera for the 2015–16 season.



WAYNE TIGGES

Judge Turpin

Wayne Tigges made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2011 creating the roles of Sam and Wesley in the world premiere

of *Heart of a Soldier* as well as singing the roles of Ariodates (*Xerxes*) and Zuniga (*Carmen*). He returned in 2013 to create the role of Joe St. George in the world premiere of *Dolores Claiborne*. The American bass-baritone's recent engagements include Willy Wonka in the European premiere of Peter Ash's *The Golden Ticket* at the Wexford Festival; Escamillo and Zuniga (*Carmen*) at the San Diego Opera; Jochanaan (*Salome*) with Arizona Opera; Basilio (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) with Opera Colorado and Lyric Opera of Chicago; Donner

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(*Das Rheingold*), Escamillo, Zuniga (*Carmen*), and the Bonze (*Madama Butterfly*) with Los Angeles Opera; the Vicar (*Albert Herring*), Basilio, Hercules (*Alceste*), and Nourabad (*Les Pêcheurs de Perles*) with the Santa Fe Opera; Escamillo at the Glyndebourne Festival; Dr. Kolenatý (*The Makropulos Case*) with Paris Opera; and Achilla (*Giulio Cesare*) with the Metropolitan Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago. A graduate of Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center, Tigges's other assignments with that company include the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Capulet (*Roméo et Juliette*), Angelotti (*Tosca*), Sam (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), and the Bonze; he also created the role of Snook in Bolcom's *A Wedding*.



DAVID CURRY
(Toronto, Canada)
Adolfo Pirelli
Tenor David Curry makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Adolfo Pirelli in *Sweeney*

Todd. Recent engagements include Kudriash (*Kát'a Kabanová*) at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires; the title role of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for Norway's Bergen National Opera; Fairfax (*Yeoman of the Guard*) at the Tower of London Festival; Nanki-Poo (*The Mikado*) for Michigan Opera Theatre; Peter Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*) for Opera Lille, Opera Reims, and the Paris Theatre Athénée. Career highlights include Tony (*West Side Story*), Arindal (*Die Feen*), Henrik (*A Little Night Music*), Stathis Borens (*The Fly*), Pirelli, and Mr. Snow (*Carousel*) with the Paris Théâtre du Châtelet; Franz (Offenbach's *Die Rheinnixen*) at London's Cadogan Hall; the title role of Lalo's *Fiesque* at London's Bloomsbury Theatre; and Antonio (Adès's *The Tempest*) in Amsterdam. Upcoming engagements include Kudriash with Danish National Opera; *Stiffelio* for Bergen National Opera; the Prince (John Adams's *A Flowering Tree*); and Rapunzel's Prince (*Into the Woods*) for the Théâtre du Châtelet.



AJ GLUECKERT
(Portland, Oregon)
Beadle Bamford
Tenor AJ Glueckert is a former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow who made his

Company debut in various roles in the world premiere of *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* in 2013. Other Company appearances include 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*. In San Francisco Opera's 2015–16 season he appears as Normanno (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) and Kunz Vogelgesang (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*). Glueckert is an alumnus of the 2012 Merola Opera Program, where he performed Mr. Owen in Argento's *Postcard from Morocco*. Upcoming engagements include Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) with Opera Theatre of St. Louis and roles with the Glyndebourne Festival and English National Opera. In the 2014–15 season he was seen as the Prince (*Rusalka*) with Frankfurt Opera. As a former resident artist with Minnesota Opera, he was heard as Arturo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) and also created the role of the Crown Prince in the world premiere of Puts's *Silent Night* with Opera Philadelphia. He 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, he holds a degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and appeared as the Drum Major (*Wozzeck*) with Opera Parallèle in San Francisco.



JAMES ASHER
(San Francisco, California)
Jonas Fogg, Birdkeeper
James Asher made his San Francisco Opera debut as

Pete and the Emcee in *Show Boat*

(2014). New York credits include *The Laramie Project*, *Brave New World*, *Sajjil*, *Destination America*, and *1000 Abu Ghraibian Nights*. Regional theater highlights include national tours of *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* and *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*; *The Laramie Project* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse); *The Foreigner* (San Jose Repertory Theatre); *Language Rooms* (Los Angeles Theatre Center); *Tape* (Magic Theater); *Back of the Throat* (Thick Description); *Below the Belt* (Waterstone Theater); *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Shakespeare Santa Cruz); and *Love's Labour's Lost* (Idaho Shakespeare Festival). Asher's film and television credits include *Paradise Club*, *Being Us*, *The Singularity is Near*, *The Confessional*, *New York's Dirty Laundry*, *Sweet Jane*, *Parenthood* (NBC), and *Spicy City* (HBO). He holds a master's degree from the American Conservatory Theater.



KATHLEEN BAYLER Quintet, Ensemble
Kathleen Bayler has been a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus since 1996 and has performed

solo roles in productions of *Louise*, *La Rondine*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and *Show Boat*.



LAUREL PORTER Quintet, Ensemble
Mezzo soprano Laurel Porter, a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, made her solo debut with

the Company in the world premiere of *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*. She has performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Glimmerglass Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Chicago Opera Theater, Sarasota Opera, Utah Festival Opera, and Virginia Opera. Roles in her repertoire include Cherubino (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), and the title roles in *La Cenerentola* and *Ariodante*.

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CHESTER PIDDUCK
Trio, Quintet,
Ensemble

A member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, Chester Pidduck has appeared in solo roles with the Company in *Idomeneo*, *La Bohème*, *La Fille du Régiment*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Moby-Dick*, *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, and *Two Women*. Featured in *Classical Singer* magazine in 2009, the tenor has performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Central City Opera, Opera Colorado, Nashville Opera, Opera San José, Livermore Opera, High Desert Opera, Mendocino Music Festival, and Sarasota Opera. He has appeared as a soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, St. Louis Symphony

Orchestra, and the Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra.



ALAN COCHRAN
Trio, Quintet,
Ensemble

Alan Cochran first began singing with the San Francisco Opera Chorus in 2005, and he makes his Company solo debut in this production. He has performed many roles throughout the Bay Area, most notably as Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*), Amon (*Akhnaten*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), and Count Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville*) among others. In 2009, he created the role of Senator Humphrey in Oakland Opera Theater's world premiere of *Dark River* by Mary Watkins.



CHRISTOPHER JACKSON
Trio, Ensemble

A member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, Christopher Jackson made his Company debut in 2010 as the Pony Express Rider (*La Fanciulla del West*) and has appeared in solo roles in twelve other Company productions. Career highlights include several roles at New York City Opera, including Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), Calaf (*Turandot*) with New York Grand Opera, Don José (*Carmen*) with Anchorage Opera, and concert performances at Carnegie Hall.



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WILLIAM O'NEILL
Quintet, Ensemble
 Bass-baritone
 William O'Neill is a Bay Area performer, conductor, and member of the San Francisco Opera

Chorus. His Company engagements include *Drunken Man (Show Boat)*, *A Man (Susannah)*, *A Trojan Chief (Les Troyens)* and *A Moroccan Sergeant (Two Women)*. His repertoire includes the title roles of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Falstaff*, *Don Magnifico (La Cenerentola)*, the *Pirate King (The Pirates of Penzance)*, *Sarastro (Die Zauberflöte)*, *Sam (Trouble in Tahiti)*, *Bottom (A Midsummer Night's Dream)*, and *Gobineau (The Medium)*.



TORLEF BORSTING
Quintet, Ensemble
 Torlef Borsting, a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, made his Company debut in 2006 as a Soldier

in *The Maid of Orleans* and returned in solo roles in *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, and *Two Women*, as well as creating the role of Wilmer McLean in *Appomattox*. Other credits for the baritone include roles with Opera San José (Germont in *La Traviata*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, and Marcello in *La Bohème*), Opera San Luis Obispo, Sacramento Opera, Eugene Opera, and Opera Parallèle.



LEE BLAKELEY
 (Yorkshire, England)
Director
 Making his San Francisco Opera debut with *Sweeney Todd*, Lee Blakeley studied at the Royal

Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and at Glasgow University. He was awarded a 2007 Churchill Travelling Fellowship. Blakeley's highly acclaimed production of *A Little Night Music* was seen at the Paris Théâtre du Châtelet, as well as *Sweeney Todd*, *Sunday in the*

Park with George (2013), *Into the Woods* and *The King and I (2014)*. In North America, Blakeley has directed, *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, *The Pearl Fishers* and *Madama Butterfly* at Santa Fe Opera; *Orpheus and Euridice* for Minnesota Opera; and *Falstaff* for Los Angeles Opera. Other credits include *Il Turco in Italia* for Angers Nantes Opera; *Così fan tutte* at London's Royal College of Music; *Into the Woods* for the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland; *A Love for Three Oranges*, *A Night at the Chinese Opera* (nominated for the 2008 TMA "Achievement in Opera" Award) and *Die Fledermaus* for Scottish Opera; as well as productions in Wexford, Philadelphia, Antwerp and London. He also directed the musical *Pat Kirkwood is Angry*, which has been performed in the U.K. and in New York. Blakeley has been an associate director for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Glyndebourne Festival Opera; and English National Opera; and has worked for Glyndebourne Touring Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera New Zealand, Royal Danish Opera, Monte Carlo Opera, and in Lille, Trieste, and Tenerife. Other recent career highlights include Handel's *Riccardo Primo* in St. Louis and *Rigoletto* for Santa Fe Opera.

TANYA MCCALLIN
 (London, England)
Production Designer

Tanya McCallin is a distinguished theatre and opera designer who works extensively in Europe, the U.S. and Australia. She has been associated with many important London theater productions including premieres of works by Arthur Miller, Pam Gems, and Mike Leigh and productions of Chekhov, Sheridan, and Shakespeare. After training at Central St. Martin's School in London, she became the resident designer for a number of British regional repertory companies. Her extensive opera work includes *The Barber of Seville* and *Manon* for English National Opera; *Carmen* with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; *La Traviata* at the Bolshoi Theater and Scottish Opera; *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; *Macbeth* in St.

Petersburg; *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Salzburg Festival; and *Semele* in Paris.

RICK FISHER
 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)
Lighting Designer

Rick Fisher made his San Francisco Opera debut with his lighting designs for *The Little Prince* in 2008. Recent career highlights include *Sunny Afternoon*, *The Audience*, *Chariots of Fire*, *Billy Elliot*, *the Musical* in London's West End; *Jerry Springer* at London's National Theatre and in the West End; *Hamlet* at the Edinburgh International Festival and in Barcelona and Birmingham; *Honour* with the National Theatre; *Far Away* in New York, *A Number* at London's Royal Court Theatre; *Blue/Orange* at the National Theatre and in the West End; *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in Berlin; and *Via Dolorosa* at the Royal Court Theatre and on Broadway. Opera credits include twenty operas for Santa Fe Opera; *Falstaff* at Japan's Saito Kinen Festival and Los Angeles Opera; *The Little Prince* for New York City Opera and Houston Grand Opera; *The Fiery Angel* and *Turandot* in Moscow; *I Capuleti e I Montecchi* with the Spoleto Festival U.S.A.; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Venice; and *The Tsarina's Slippers* and *Wozzeck* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. A veteran of British theatre for more than twenty years, he serves as vice president of the U.K.'s Association of Lighting Designers.

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

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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.

LORENA RANDI
(Devon, England)
Choreographer

Lorena Randi makes her San Francisco Opera debut with her work on *Sweeney Todd*. Her theatrical work includes the choreography for *Into the Woods* (2014), *Sunday in the Park with George* (2013) and *Sweeney Todd* (2011), all directed by Lee Blakeley at the Paris Théâtre du Châtelet; and *Candide* (2013) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2012) directed by Sam Brown for Opéra National de Lorraine. Most recently, *The Queen of Spades* directed by David Alden for English National Opera.

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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.

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DREW ALITZER



A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie stands in front of a building at night. The building has ornate architectural details and several glowing lanterns mounted on the wall. The man is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

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Fabrizio Corona, *Associate Chorus Master*
Jim Meyer, *Chorus and Dance Manager*
Mary Finch, *Assistant Chorus Manager/ Chorus Librarian*
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Tracy Davis, *Orchestra Manager*
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* Senior Production Staff Member

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Cheryl Mennen, *Cutter*
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Kristi Johnson, *Production Supervisor*
Manuel Gutierrez, *Production Coordinator*
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

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Marie Shuster, *Assistant Stage Managers*

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Maia Knezevic, *Wig Apprentice*
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Melanie Birch, Rick Burns, Denise Gutierrez, Monica Maka, Vicky Martinez, Toby Mayer, Connie Strayer, Karalynne Fiebig, *Journeymen*
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Laura Albers
Associate Concertmaster



Heidi Wilcox
Assistant Concertmaster



Jennifer Cho
First Violin



Dawn Harms
First Violin



Mariya Borozina
First Violin



Barbara Riccardi
First Violin



Leonid Igudesman
First Violin



Asuka Annie Yano
First Violin



Wenyi Shih
First Violin
Regular Substitute



Robin Hansen
First Violin
Regular Substitute



Jeremy Preston
Principal
Second Violin



Martha Simonds
Associate Principal
Second Violin



Beni Shinohara
Assistant Principal
Second Violin



Eva Karasik
Second Violin



Leslie Ludena
Second Violin



Linda Deutsch
Second Violin



Craig Reiss
Second Violin



Joseph Edelberg
Second Violin
Regular Substitute



Marianne Wagner
Second Violin
Regular Substitute



Carla Maria Rodrigues
Principal
Viola



Sergey Rakitchenkov
Associate Principal
Viola



Paul Nahhas
Assistant Principal
Viola



Patricia Heller
Viola



Jonna Hervig
Viola



Natalia Vershilova
Viola



Joy Fellows
Viola



David Kadarauich
Principal
Cello



Thalia Moore
Associate Principal
Cello



Nora Pirquet
Associate Principal
Cello



Emil Miland
Cello



Victoria Ehrlich
Cello



Ruth Lane
Cello



Joseph Lescher
Principal
Bass



Jonathan Lancelle
Associate Principal
Bass

SAN FRANCISCO ORCHESTRA CONTINUED



Steven D'Amico
Assistant Principal
Bass



Shinji Eshima
Bass



Mark Drury
Bass



Julie McKenzie
Principal
Flute



Patricia Farrell
Flute



Stephanie McNab
Flute & Piccolo



Mingjia Liu
Principal
Oboe



Deborah Henry
Assistant Principal
Oboe



Janet Popesco
Archibald
Oboe & English Horn



Deborah Shidler
Oboe
Regular Substitute



Jose Gonzalez
Granero
Principal Clarinet



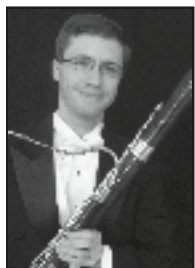
Joanne Burke Eisler
Assistant Principal
Clarinet



Anthony Striplen
Clarinet &
Bass Clarinet



Rufus Olivier
Principal
Bassoon



Daniel MacNeill
Bassoon



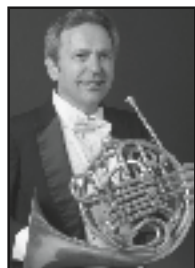
Michael Severance
Bassoon &
Contrabassoon



Kevin Rivard
Co-Principal
Horn



Christopher Cooper
Acting Co-Principal
Horn



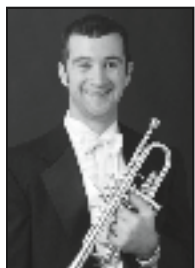
Keith Green
Horn



Brian McCarty
Horn



Lawrence Ragent
Horn



Adam Luftman
Principal
Trumpet



William Holmes
Trumpet



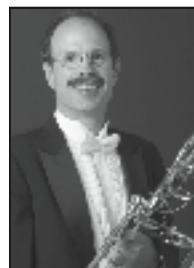
John Pearson
Trumpet



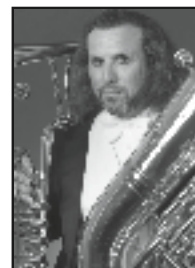
Samuel Schlosser
Principal Trombone



Donald Kennelly
Trombone



David Ridge
Trombone &
Bass Trombone



Zachariah Spellman
Tuba/Cimbasso



John Burgardt
Timpani



Richard Kvistad
Principal Percussion &
Associate Timpani



Patricia Niemi
Percussion



Olga Ortenberg
Rakitchenkov
Harp



Tracy Davis
Orchestra Manager



Carrie Weick
Librarian



Timothy Spears
Assistant Orchestra
Manager & Librarian

Most photos by John Martin. Not pictured: Lev Rankov, First Violin; Eric Sung, Cello, Regular Substitute.

REGULAR CHORUS



Kathleen Bayler
Soprano



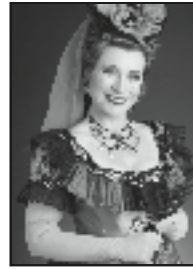
Sara Colburn
Soprano



Dvora Djoraev
Soprano



Mary Finch
Soprano



Claire Kelm
Soprano



Elisabeth Rom Lucio
Soprano



Angela Eden Moser
Soprano



Rachelle Perry
Soprano



Virginia Pluth
Soprano



Carole Schaffer
Soprano



Mitzie Kay Weiner
Soprano



Roberta Bowman
Mezzo-Soprano



Janet Campbell
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Mouzon
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Munro
Mezzo-Soprano



Erin Neff
Mezzo-Soprano



Laurel Porter
Mezzo-Soprano



Laurel Rice
Mezzo-Soprano



Shelley Seitz
Mezzo-Soprano



Claudia Siefer
Mezzo-Soprano



Nicole Takesono
Mezzo-Soprano



Donna Turchi
Mezzo-Soprano



C. Michael Belle
Tenor



Alan Cochran
Tenor



Chris Corley
Tenor



Daniel Harper
Tenor



Christopher Jackson
Tenor



Phillip Pickens
Tenor



Chester Pidduck
Tenor



Colby Roberts
Tenor



Sigmund Seigel
Tenor



Dan Stanley
Tenor



Andrew Truett
Tenor



Richard Walker
Tenor



Torlef Borsting
Baritone

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA REGULAR CHORUS CONTINUED



Frank Daniels
Baritone



Cameron Henley
Baritone



Ken Johnson
Baritone



David Kekuewa
Baritone



Bojan Knežević
Bass



Frederick Matthews
Baritone



Jim Meyer
Bass



William O'Neill
Bass



William Pickersgill
Bass



Valery Portnov
Bass



Ken Rafanan
Baritone



Michael Rogers
Baritone



Jere Torkelsen
Baritone

*Most photos by
John Martin.*

*Carole Schaffer
and Claudia Siefer
photos by
Pamela Dale.*

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CORPS DANCERS



David Bier
Leave of Absence



Brook Broughton



Blanche Hampton



Bryan Ketron



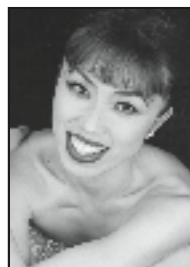
Michael Kruzich
Leave of Absence



Michael Levine



Rachel Speidel Little



Chiharu Shibata

ARTISTS

Julie Adams † ♪
 Ain Anger*
 Paul Appleby*
 James Asher
 René Barbera ♪
 Piotr Beczala
 Vitaliy Bilyy*
 Jordan Bisch
 Corey Bix
 Stephanie Blythe
 Kathryn Bowden † ♪
 William Burden
 Malin Byström*
 Catherine Cook † ♪
 Sasha Cooke
 Alessandro Corbelli
 Ginger Costa-Jackson
 Leah Crocetto † ♪
 Richard Croft
 David Curry*
 Diana Damrau
 Nikki Einfeld † ♪
 Michael Fabiano
 Greg Fedderly
 Elizabeth Futral
 Martin Gantner*
 A.J. Glueckert † ♪
 Matthew Grills
 Erika Grimaldi*
 Greer Grimsley
 Philip Horst † ♪
 Brian Jagde † ♪
 Brandon Jovanovich
 Nadia Krasteva*
 Mariucz Kwiecien
 Daniela Mack † ♪
 Elliot Madore*
 Riccardo Massi*
 Karita Mattila
 Lucas Meachem † ♪
 Brian Mulligan
 Edward Nelson † ♪
 Zachary Nelson*
 René Pape
 Jacqueline Piccolino † ♪
 Lee Poulis
 Scott Quinn*
 Anthony Reed † ♪
 Alfred Reiter
 Irene Roberts

Ekaterina Semenchuk*
 Albina Shagimuratova
 Alek Shrader † ♪
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 Rafał Siwek*
 Efraín Solís † ♪
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 Krassimira Stoyanova*
 Matthew Stump † ♪
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 Daniel Sumegi † ♪
 Zanda Švėde † ♪
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 Chong Wang † ♪
 Nian Wang † ♪
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 James Lowe*
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 Carlo Montanaro*
 Patrick Summers ♪

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Tod Nixon

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 Andrew George*
 Jo Jeffries*
 Lawrence Pech
 Lorena Randi*
 Colm Seery*

* San Francisco Opera debut

† = Former Adler Fellow

‡ = Current Adler Fellow

♪ = Merola Opera Program participant (past or present)

Ian Robertson, *Chorus Director*

Fabrizio Corona, *Associate Chorus Master*

Jim Meyer, *Chorus and Dance Manager*

Mary Finch, *Assistant Chorus Manager/*

Chorus Librarian

REGULAR CHORUS

Kathleen Bayler *	C. Michael Belle *
Roberta Bowman	Torlef Borsting *
Janet Campbell	Alan Cochran *
Sara Colburn	Chris Corley
Dvora Djorae	Frank Daniels
Mary Finch *	Daniel Harper
Claudia Haider	Cameron Henley
Claire Kelm*	Christopher Jackson *
Elisabeth Rom Lucio	Ken Johnson
Angela Eden Moser	David Kekuewa
Sally Mouzon *	Bojan Knežević *
Sally Porter Munro *	Frederick Matthews
Erin Neff *	Jim Meyer
Rachelle Perry	William O'Neill *
Virginia Pluth *	Phillip Pickens *
Laurel Cameron Porter *	William Pickersgill *
Laurel Rice	Chester Pidduck *
Shelley Seitz	Valery Portnov
Carole Schaffer *	Ken Rafanan
Nicole Takesono *	Colby Roberts
Donna Turchi	Michael Rogers *
Mitzie Weiner	Sigmund Seigel

*Chorus member appearing in a Solo Role

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Buffy Baggott	Richard Block
Elizabeth Baker	Micah Epps
Jennifer Brody	Adam Flowers
Johanna Bronk	Timothy Foster
Angela Cadelago	Peter Girardôt
Katie Carlson	Thomas Hart
Karen Winner Huff	Michael Jankosky
Silvie Jensen	Jimmy Kansau
Carolyn Jordan	Bradley Kynard
Sara LeMesh	Anthony P. McGlaun
Katherine McKee	Raymond Martinez
Eileen Meredith	Michael Mendelsohn
Frances Peterson	Jim Monios
Aimée Puentes	Jess G. Perry
Lori Willis	Keith Perry
Jacque Wilson	Samuel Rabinowitz
Kali Wilson	Tom Reed
Angelique Zuluaga	Pedro Rodelas
	Alfredo Rodriguez
	Clifton Romig
	Karl Saarni
	Alexander Taite
	Michael Taylor
	Nicholas Volkert

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Lawrence Pech, *Dance Master*

Laura Alexich
Brook Broughton †
Jamielyn Duggan
Blanche Hampton †
Ilana Jonas
Rachel Speidel Little †
Angela Dice Nguyen
Chiharu Shibata †

David M. Bier †*
Gregory DeSantis
Stephen Di Biase
Bryan Ketron †
Michael Kruzich †*
Michael Levine †
Jekyns Peláez

* Leave of Absence
† Tenured

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Zachary Diener
Peter Greathouse
Brian Patterson

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Jordi Bernàcer, *Resident Conductor*

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Laura Albers, *Associate Concertmaster* *
Heidi Wilcox, *Assistant Concertmaster*
Jennifer Cho
Dawn Harms
Mariya Borozina
Lev Rankov
Barbara Riccardi
Leonid Igudesman
Asuka Annie Yano
Wenyi Shih **
Robin Hansen **

SECOND VIOLIN

Jeremy Preston, *Principal*
Martha Simonds, *Associate Principal* *
Beni Shinohara, *Assistant Principal*
Eva Karasik
Leslie Ludena
Linda Deutsch Twohy
Craig Reiss
Joseph Edelberg**
Marianne Wagner **

VIOLA

Carla Maria Rodrigues, *Principal*
Sergey Rakitchenkov, *Associate Principal* *
Paul Nahhas, *Assistant Principal*
Patricia Heller
Jonna Hervig
Natalia Vershilova
Joy Fellows

CELLO

David Kadarau, *Principal*
Thalia Moore, *Associate Principal* *
Nora Pirquet, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Emil Miland
Victoria Ehrlich
Ruth Lane
Eric Sung **

BASS

Joseph Lescher, *Principal*
Jonathan Lancelle, *Associate Principal* *
Steven D'Amico, *Assistant Principal*
Shinji Eshima
Mark Drury

FLUTE

Julie McKenzie, *Principal*
Patricia Farrell *
Stephanie McNab

PICCOLO

Stephanie McNab

OBOE

Mingjia Liu, *Principal*
Deborah Henry, *Assistant Principal* †
Deborah Shidler **
Janet Popesco Archibald *

ENGLISH HORN

Janet Popesco Archibald

CLARINET

Jose Gonzalez Granero, *Principal*
Joanne Burke Eisler, *Assistant Principal* *
Anthony Striplen

BASS CLARINET

Anthony Striplen

BASSOON

Rufus Olivier, *Principal*
Daniel MacNeill *
Michael Severance

CONTRABASSOON

Michael Severance

HORN

Kevin Rivard, *Co-Principal*
Christopher Cooper, *Co Principal* **
Keith Green
Brian McCarty
Lawrence Ragent

TRUMPET

Adam Luftman, *Principal*
William Holmes
John Pearson *

TROMBONE

Samuel Schlosser, *Principal*
Donald Kennelly
David Ridge

TUBA/CIMBASSO

Zachariah Spellman

TIMPANI

John Burgardt

PERCUSSION

Richard Kvistad, *Principal/Associate Timpani*
Patricia Niemi

HARP

Olga Rakitchenkov

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If you are unable to use your tickets to a particular performance, you may exchange them for tickets to another performance, subject to availability, or donate them back to the Opera. Ticket exchanges for future performances can be accommodated up to one hour before curtain or during the first intermission. No refunds are associated with ticket exchanges, and a fee (plus any price differential) may apply.

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- 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.

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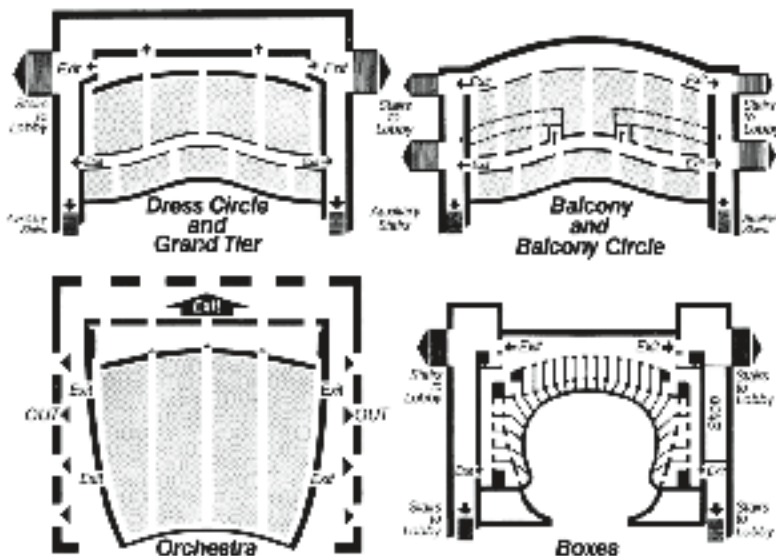
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San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center War Memorial Opera House



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INSPIRES OUR
COMMUNITY.

WE AGREE.

Chevron is a proud sponsor of the San Francisco Opera and applauds the Opera for all they do to inspire the community.

An inspired community enriches the lives of the people who live and work there. At Chevron, we support local arts because they expand our perspective. They spark our creativity. The arts bring a vitality and energy to our community that helps keep it moving forward.

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