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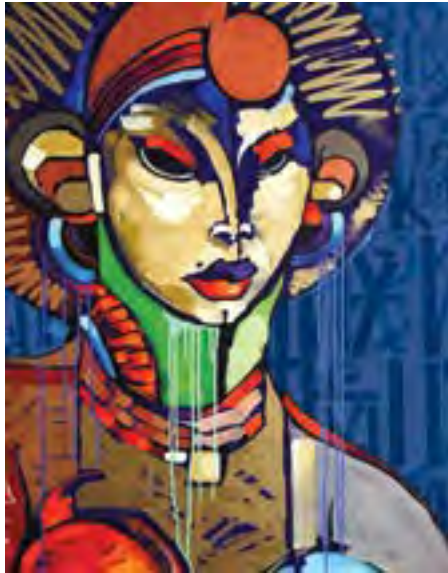
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Iron Eye Art Group

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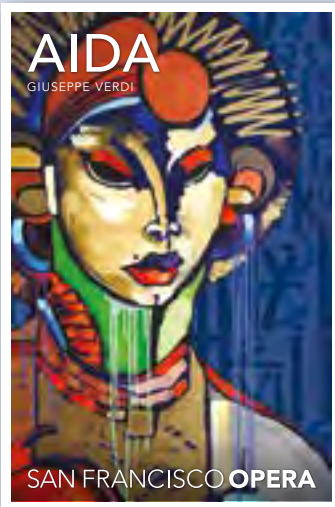
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THE BOARD OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

As our exciting fall season draws to a close, we come to the time of year of giving and sharing. We are enormously grateful to our patrons and donors for your commitment to this terrific Company. In this holiday season, we present you with the gift of opera: an adventurous new production of Verdi's *Aida*, directed by Francesca Zambello (*Der Ring des Nibelungen* and *Show Boat*), and a revival of Puccini's ever-popular *Madama Butterfly* with sets and costumes by the visionary Jun Kaneko. On November 19, our outstanding San Francisco Opera Chorus, led by



SCOTT WALL

Chorus Director Ian Robertson, will present a special program in the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater, followed by our annual Adler Fellows Gala Concert on December 2 and a December 8 concert by the San Francisco Opera Orchestra strings.

Reflecting on this remarkable year, we take pride in many wonderful accomplishments. In February, we realized a longstanding dream with the opening of the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera in the Veterans Building, which gives San Francisco Opera a year-round performance presence. In June, we honored David Gockley's legacy with an unforgettable gala concert, and in August we welcomed Matthew Shilvock as our seventh general director. In September, the world premiere of Bright Sheng and David Henry Hwang's *Dream of the Red Chamber* galvanized our community and played to sold-out audiences.

These achievements would not be possible without your dedication and enthusiasm, for which we are deeply grateful. Producing great opera, which enriches the lives of more than 250,000 patrons each year, requires an immense investment of time, talent, and resources. As you consider your options for year-end giving, please consider San Francisco Opera. Your generosity sustains and enhances world-class opera in the Bay Area.

Thank you for your support, and we wish you and your family a marvelous holiday season.

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SF Opera Lab Readies for Season Two



SF Opera Lab's intimate experiences and innovative performances return for a second season at the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera. From February through April, SF Opera Lab explores a rich tapestry of sound worlds that draw thematically on the intersection of personal expression and musical experimentation.

Launching the season from February 24 through March 3 is the powerful oratorio *The Source* by composer Ted Hearne and librettist Mark Doten, based on the real-life story of Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning, the U.S. Army private who disclosed hundreds of thousands of classified military documents to WikiLeaks in 2010. Through a larger-than-life four-channel video installation of Twitter feeds, cable news reports, chat transcripts, and classified military video, a chorus sings

with electronically-processed voices and a live ensemble of seven instrumentalists. "Composer Ted Hearne employs the classic structure of the oratorio but in an incredibly innovative way. A musical tapestry with influences of jazz, pop, and sampling bring us directly into a space that captures how it feels to be inundated by information amid today's ever-increasing speed of communication," says SF Opera Lab Artistic Curator Elkhanah Pulitzer.



Whereas *The Source* portrays existential anguish brought on by the U.S.'s involvement overseas, Francis Poulenc's one-act, 1958 monodrama *La Voix humaine* presents the private crisis of a woman spurned by her lover via a shared party-line phone. For these SF Opera Lab performances on March 11, 14, and 17, acclaimed Italian soprano Anna Caterina

Antonacci (*Les Troyens* and *Two Women*) brings to vivid life one of her most celebrated roles in a program that also includes a set of French art songs.

On April 23, in a co-presentation with SF Performances PIVOT series, the Grammy-winning vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth sings an eclectic mix of contemporary repertoire, including settings of Shakespeare sonnets as well as Caroline Shaw's renowned *Partita for 8 Voices*. Awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2013, this a cappella work was inspired by such far-ranging influences as Bach and technical wall-drawing directions of the late artist Sol LeWitt.

"Shaw's music taps into pure joy," says Pulitzer. "It is uplifting, celebrating the human spirit in contrast to the intense political searching and personal heartbreak we explore earlier in the season."

SF Opera Lab Season Two, which takes place at the Wilsey Center's Taube Atrium Theater and in Pop-Up form across the Bay Area, will also feature a unique evening of ChamberWORKS curated by members of the SF Opera Orchestra. For more detailed information and tickets, call (415) 864-3330 or visit sfo-per-alab.com.



Roomful of Teeth



STEFAN COHEN

2016 Adler Fellows
Zanda Švēde and Matthew Stump

Adler Fellows Perform in Gala Concert

San Francisco Opera Center presents the culminating concert of the 2016 Adler Fellowship season, *The Future Is Now: Adler Fellows Gala Concert*, on Friday, December 2 at 7:30 p.m. at the Herbst Theatre. The concert showcases the acclaimed Adler Fellows from San Francisco Opera Center's young artist training program in a gala concert of opera scenes and arias with Resident Conductor Jordi Bernàcer leading the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

The Future Is Now features sopranos Julie Adams (Burbank, California), Amina Edris (Christchurch, New Zealand), and Toni Marie Palmertree (Fleetwood, Pennsylvania); mezzo-sopranos Zanda Švēde (Valmiera, Latvia) and Nian Wang (Nanjing, China); tenor Pene Pati (Auckland, New Zealand); baritone Edward Nelson (Santa Clarita, California); bass-baritones Matthew Stump (Goshen, Indiana) and Brad Walker (Lake Zurich, Illinois); bass Anthony Reed (Alexandria, Minnesota); and pianist/apprentice coach Ronny Michael Greenberg (Montreal, Canada). This concert marks the final performance by Julie Adams, Zanda Švēde, Nian Wang, Edward Nelson, and Matthew Stump as San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows.

For more information and to purchase tickets, call the Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330 or visit sfoera.com/futureisnow.



ED ANDERSON

Notes from the General Director

Revisiting the Classics

When I was in college I had a fascination with the art of the Pre-Raphaelites and the mythic romanticism embodied in so much of their work. I remember an older friend who was a contemporary illustrator saying to me, “Oh, don’t worry, you’ll grow out of it.” And, as much as I still enjoy a good Burne-Jones, that school of art certainly doesn’t hold the allure it once did. I am fascinated by the ability of art (whether visual or performance) to resonate with us in different ways at different times in our lives. We look for and find certain cues in the arts that help us express ourselves, understand ourselves, even question ourselves.

What intrigues me about opera is that these powerful stories about humanity cut to an emotional core so fundamental that we immediately identify with the protagonists no matter what stage we are at in life. We may not identify with the blood-lust revenge of Turandot, but we resonate with someone who has put up huge psychological walls against love, and who finally allows someone in. We may not identify with the specific action taken by Butterfly at the end of the opera, but we resonate with the anguish of a mother and child being forced apart. Great operas allow us, the audience, and our personal emotions into the story.

The classic operas endure because their emotional world is so deep, so rich, that we can find different resonance in them at different points in our lives. During my “Pre-Raphaelite period” I gravitated to the end of Act I of *Butterfly* and the great love duet—the ache of love which ultimately leads to tragedy. Now, with a wife and two young children, I tear up at the moment in Act II when Butterfly introduces her young son to the American Consul. In music of soaring hope we see an unbridled belief in the promise of youth, darkened by the Consul’s awareness of how much more complex the situation has just become. Likewise, in *Aida*, as with so many other opera-goers, my first *Aida* (on a Met DVD with Plácido Domingo and Aprile Millo) was very much about the pomp and pageantry of the Triumphal Scene—the layering of music, dance, ritual, and spectacle. Now, it is the impassioned encounter of Amneris and Radames in Act IV, Scene 1 where Radames refuses to renounce Aida that cuts most to my heart. I’m sure in ten years it will be another moment still.

Opera is an emotional art form. No matter how complex the plots, how detailed the libretto, operas work because they hit us hard in the solar plexus. The operas that have endured as classics do that with the broadest audiences and do so immediately on first experience. I love the scene in *Pretty Woman* where Julia Roberts is on a fairy-tale trip to San Francisco Opera. Here is a person with no operatic experience, with tears streaming down her face at the last act of *Traviata*. It epitomizes opera’s ability to hold up mirrors to our own life experiences, its ability to give moments of extreme catharsis, its propensity to render us blubbering emotional wrecks in a communal setting.

If you are watching these operas for the first time, or revisiting them as fond friends, I am excited for what your own resonance will be this time around. Not only are the casts, conductors, and productions different. You are also different from when you saw them last and, in that, new versions of these pieces will emerge. ●

—MATTHEW SHILVOCK



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From 1990’s *Pretty Woman* Julia Roberts and Richard Gere

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES



Opera Shop Recommendations

In the new book *American Impresario* by Damian Fowler, tenor Plácido Domingo, mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, composer John Adams, and other opera luminaries reflect on the long and distinguished career of San Francisco Opera General Director Emeritus David Gockley.

Revel further in the music of Verdi's *Aida* with the recent CD release from Warner Classics. Antonio Pappano conducts an all-star cast, including Jonas Kaufmann, Anja Harteros, Ekaterina Semenchuk, and Erwin Schrott.



CORY WEAVER

George and Ira Gershwin's quintessentially American masterpiece *Porgy and Bess* comes to life in the DVD/Blu-ray from San Francisco Opera and EuroArts Music International. The acclaimed 2009 production, directed by Francesca Zambello, features Eric Owens and Laquita Mitchell in the title roles.

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Jane Mudge

New Leadership at Opera Guild

At the recent annual meeting of the San Francisco Opera Guild, the Opera Guild elected Jane Mudge, a prominent business owner and community fundraiser, as president for a two-year term. Mudge will oversee a \$2.5 million annual budget for the Opera Guild's student and adult education programs along with fundraising and special events, including the annual Opera Ball. She succeeds Charlot D. Malin who steps down after a successful 24-month tenure.

The Opera Guild has also announced Afsaneh Akhtari and Toni Wolfson as chairs for their annual spring event. The chairs for Opera Ball 2017 are Courtney Labe and Maryam Muduroglu.

There are a few remaining tickets available for Monday, December 5's *An Evening on the Stage* honoring business leader, philanthropist, and past San Francisco Opera Chairman Franklin (Pitch) Johnson. The gala's cocktail reception, onstage dinner, and dancing at the War Memorial Opera House will be chaired by Kathryn Huber and Teresa Medearis. For more information, call (415) 565-3204 or visit sfopera.com/opera-guild.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA *Profile*

Mingjia Liu

San Francisco Opera Orchestra

Principal Oboe



CORY WEAVER

For musician Mingjia Liu, there is no opera in the repertoire quite like Verdi's *Aida*. With a pivotal oboe solo in the third-act aria "O patria mia," the oboist enjoys a rare, extended opportunity to shine along with the singer portraying the title role. "There are a lot of operas with good oboe solos, but *Aida* is above the rest. To find something comparable to *Aida*... well, there really isn't one."

Liu feels that Verdi found the perfect accompaniment for his heroine's poignant, show-stopping aria. "The oboe has a special power to reach the heart," he says. "The sound is so soft and touching it can make you cry. It's the closest sound to a human voice."

Liu was born in Qingdao, China, formerly known as Tsingtao. "Where the beer is from," adds Liu. He started along his professional path at the age of six. "My father fell in love with music as a teenager. At the time, China was still recovering from the Cultural Revolution, so he didn't really have a teacher and there weren't any opportunities. He saved his dream for me." One of Liu's first experiences playing oboe in an orchestra setting was at age nine. "I was laughing and couldn't stop smiling. I thought, 'This is so cool!' I was playing my part and hearing everyone else playing at the same time. We were producing this wonderful melody together and it was just awesome. That was the moment."

Of the many highlights from his years with the Orchestra (he

started with the Company in 2010), one special 2014 performance of *Madama Butterfly* still stands out in his memory. Maestro Luisotti was conducting and everyone in the pit was united with an uncanny level of sympathy. "That was one of the best performing experiences I have ever had. From the beginning to the very last note, everybody's minds, passion, and experiences were so together. It was like we didn't think about anything but the music. That evening, everybody was completely locked in and playing at their very best."

Unlike symphonic musicians who take solo bows at the end of a performance, Liu and his colleagues in the pit receive satisfaction and feedback in a different way: "I can see the facial expressions of the audience members in the front row. They are like a mirror of what is happening on the stage." In his years with the Orchestra, he has come to know many of the patrons in those seats. "A lot of them, they know the orchestra and the instrumentalists. They will look at us when they hear a moment that moves them."

Any final advice for opera-goers? "Close your eyes!" Liu laughs. "When those magical moments happen and you can enjoy being moved by the music, then I would recommend doing that. Close your eyes and enjoy."

— JEFFERY McMILLAN

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BY STEVEN WINN

Meeting Matthew Shilvock

*San Francisco Opera's
new general director
has everyone
paying attention*

When Matthew Shilvock arrived at Houston Grand Opera as a 26-year-old OPERA America fellow in 2002, he struck that company's then-General Director David Gockley as "clearly smart and extremely knowledgeable, but also very shy initially and tentative on his feet." Gockley trusted his instincts about a young man he saw as "destined to run an opera company someday," first by hiring him as projects manager in Houston and then by bringing him along to the Bay Area a decade ago, when Gockley was appointed San Francisco Opera's general director in 2006.

On August 1, 2016, after spending the past five years as his mentor's associate general director and right-hand-man on everything from Opera at the Ballpark simulcasts to delicate union negotiations, Shilvock assumed the Company's top leadership position. He becomes the seventh general director in San Francisco Opera's 94-year history and, at age 40, the youngest ever.

Dramaturg Clifford ("Kip") Cranna, who has worked under six general directors here, regards Shilvock as a multi-talented prodigy. "He has an amazing ability to get things done on a big scale, while absorbing and managing the minute details," said Cranna. Especially propitious, he went on, is the new general director's wide skill set, which extends from a quick discernment of singers in auditions to a command of production details to his mastery of complex labor issues.

be. We focus a lot of our attention on what we do onstage—the story of the opera, the singers—and not enough on what this means to you, the audience member, as the recipient. The big shift we need to make in our messaging and outreach is from standing on the stage and looking out to sitting in the audience and looking in."

One of Shilvock's first administrative moves was the establishment of a new top-level department, Philanthropy and Audiences, which will address those very issues. As he refines his choice of repertoire in the years ahead and sharpens an already keen awareness of a rapidly evolving city, Shilvock hopes to build on the expansive, audience-centric potential of an art form that, in his words, "is at heart about making powerful emotional connections."

Shilvock views everything from the ticket-buying process and parking to the wine at the War Memorial Opera House bars and lines at the rest rooms as integrated and essential components of the patron experience. The Company's proximity to the burgeoning mid-Market tech community, along with the broader region's demographic diversity, are "unique gifts." "We have to inspire people, all kinds of people, to be a part of who we are and instill the idea that the Opera House is an exciting place to be and not some anonymous public building where they process parking fines," he said.

"Matthew has a great ability to span a wide variety of audiences in a changing time," said San Francisco Opera Board Member and restaurateur Bill Russell-Shapiro (owner of Absinthe,

"The big shift we need to make in our messaging and outreach is from standing on the stage and looking out to sitting in the audience and looking in."
—General Director Matthew Shilvock

Francesca Zambello—the noted stage director whose long association with San Francisco Opera includes this season's *Aida* and a complete *Ring* cycle that returns in 2018—called Shilvock "a great colleague and collaborator who is incredibly supportive of the artist. He's very good at helping you articulate your own thoughts and be more soul-searching about a design detail or the motivations of a character. And he's always so even-tempered, even when artistic meetings get a little hot under the collar."

Any doubts that Shilvock can fulfill Gockley's and others' high expectations are firmly set to rest by spending time in his congenial and clear-eyed company and witnessing him in action on the job. At a recent marketing meeting, convened to discuss the Company's summer 2017 season, Shilvock attended closely to a PowerPoint presentation on four alternate designs for brochures, posters, and banners. Then, without imposing any definitive judgments, he posed all the right questions, whether about content, fonts, or background colors, to move the conversation along.

In just a few months on the job, Shilvock has already started to put his stamp on the Company, in ways both immediate and far-reaching. Many of his decisions are driven by a central tenet: "The one thing I would like to accomplish during my tenure is to make the bridge between the community and the art form as strong as it can

Arlequin, and Bellota). "I think his youth is a real asset. He's a great listener, but he also has the forthrightness and confidence to get things done."

An avid user of Twitter and Instagram, Shilvock is very much a 21st-century communicator. At the same time, cognizant that many opera-goers may not be social media savvy, he's reaching out in other ways. "Backstage with Matthew," a regular conversational email that reaches some 13,000 patrons and staff, offers a kind of ongoing virtual tour of the Company's inner workings and of Shilvock's own roaming interests. One diary-style letter focused on a French horn player in the orchestra and the costume designer for *Andrea Chénier*. In another, Shilvock described his trip to the Company's scene shop in Burlingame to observe the painting and construction of the elaborate set panels for *Dream of the Red Chamber*.

Soft-spoken and somewhat donnish in appearance—he might pass for a young classics scholar or headmaster-in-the-making—the English-born, Oxford-educated Shilvock is possessed of a singular sense of calm and self-awareness, leavened by a dry wit and subtle, mischievous grin. After a last-second amendment to his lunch order of a smoked chicken salad at the Hayes Street Grill, he shot a quick helpless look across the table. "I *almost* didn't order the French fries," he said.



Left: From the September 10, 2016 opening night celebration for the world premiere of *Dream of Red Chamber*, Shilcock with soprano Pureum Jo (Dai Yu), composer Bright Sheng, and tenor Yijie Shi (Bao Yu).

Right: General Director Emeritus David Gockley with Shilcock at a June reception at the home of Ann and Gordon Getty.

When it comes to the important decisions, he is disciplined and orderly in a job that might strike almost anyone as impossibly complex. In one of his warp-speed morning planning sessions with his assistant, Genevieve Ennis, Shilcock reviewed a schedule that would include multiple meetings, a session with senior staff, and a drive to Palo Alto for a meet-and-greet with current and potential donors. He *might* make it back for the final performance of *Andrea Chénier*. He'd have exactly one hour free all day and well into the evening.

Two days later, on a flight to Washington, D.C., Shilcock would spend his time in the air writing thank-you notes and reviewing a recording for radio release. On the following night, an intermission of the Metropolitan Opera's *Tristan und Isolde* was penciled in for socializing with San Francisco Opera donors who would be attending the performance in New York. And could Ennis get him back on an earlier flight Tuesday, he asked, so he could attend an afternoon meeting here? Almost every minute, it seems, is spoken for.

Shilcock estimates that 40 to 50 percent of his time is spent in meetings, another 25 percent in rehearsal and future planning, and the remaining 25 percent or so is interacting with donors and subscribers. The days are long and the nights sometimes longer, especially for a father of a four-year-old son and two-year-old daughter. Shilcock met his wife, Kate, in 2005, when she was working in San Francisco Opera's development department. She is now a consultant for non-profits.

After spending some early A.M. time with his children one

sunny morning, Shilcock offered coffee and a plate of Kate's homemade banana bread on the shaded back deck of his family's hillside ranch house in southern Novato. Two tricycles were parked out front and the normal scattering of toys packed away. The family's two Boston terriers, Brantley and Abigail, were confined in another room. "They can be a little insistent," said Shilcock, who likes to hike with the dogs on a nearby ridge trail when his schedule allows.

Born in Kidderminster, in "the rolling green part of England," Shilcock is the son of a Church of England priest and a mother who works as a pharmacy dispenser. A younger brother is a bicycle mechanic. His younger sister works in marketing and fashion.

Matthew sang in the church choir and at various times took up the piano, cello, organ, French horn, and, he noted with a shrug, "the oboe for a few weeks." He counts a Welsh National Opera production of Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, a concert version of the *Ring* in Birmingham, and a Simon Rattle-conducted cycle of Nielsen symphonies as formative early experiences. Director Graham Vick's "immersive" productions at the Birmingham Opera Company, including an *Idomeneo* staged in an abandoned rubber factory, also made a big impact on Shilcock. Chamber music remains an enduring love, a telling attachment for someone who appears to work so smoothly and responsively with others.

After studying musicology at Oxford (he wrote his thesis on the French Baroque composer Jean-Baptiste Lully), Shilcock spent two



CORY WEAVER



CORY WEAVER



SCOTT WALL

Above: General Director Matthew Shillock speaks with patrons before a dress rehearsal of Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*.

Left: From April's ARIA Festival at the Wilsey Center for Opera's Taube Atrium Theater, Matthew Shillock with his family, Curriculum and Programs Specialist Charles Chip McNeal, and Opera Board Member Sylvia Lindsey.

years working for a management consulting firm. But even in “stepping away from music for a while,” Shillock remained in its orbit. When his boss asked him to do a little research about how music might aid learning, he produced a 50,000-word tome on the subject.

Despite never intending to live on this side of the Atlantic, Shillock elected to pursue a master’s degree in public administration at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. It was from there, on his OPERA America fellowship, that he found his way to Houston and a career-forging alliance with Gockley.

The French Baroque remains an important touchstone. In one of the few specific things he’s prepared to say about his artistic plans, Shillock is committed to getting Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764) onto the Opera House stage for the first time. The general director turns rhapsodic about the composer’s scores: “a combination of rhythmic ballet music and exquisite arias that spin these sumptuous lines of music.” As with Handel operas like the 2014 *Partenope* that have proved wonderfully stageworthy here, Shillock sees a choice opportunity to reach audiences in a fresh way.

“Because the Baroque repertoire is so little known and the elaborate stories kind of irrelevant,” he said, “there’s something very freeing about that.” Imaginative, contemporary stagings of these centuries-old works, Shillock believes, can yield the kind of immediacy that matters most—“opera that you can unlock your soul and heart.”

Shillock, who will program two-thirds of the 2018–19 Season and all of the following year, is acutely aware of the fiscal realities. Expenses are growing three percent a year while revenues rise one percent. “I think this is one of those things where an internal transition is helpful,” he said, of taking up where Gockley left off. His decade-long familiarity with the workings of the Company—“what levers you can pull to make changes and what that will cost”—is reassuring. “I think we can chart a course forward with some reasonable expectation that it will take us where we want to be. But it is scary. The finances are inherently scary.”

Shillock’s deep knowledge of the Company, steady demeanor, and light-touch sense of humor go a long way toward balancing the anxieties. “Here’s something about the job I might not have been fully prepared for,” he said, lifting his brows a fraction to signal something droll on the way. “Every time you walk into a room, people expect you to say something.”

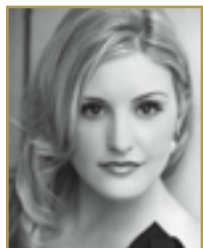
Shillock may be kidding himself a little. But as he knows perfectly well, San Francisco Opera’s new general director has everyone’s close attention. 🍷

Steven Winn is an award-winning journalist and fiction writer who spent many years as a staff writer at the San Francisco Chronicle. His work has appeared in Good Housekeeping, National Lampoon, the New York Times, Parenting, Prairie Schooner, Sports Illustrated, Art News, and the Utne Reader. He lives with his family in San Francisco.

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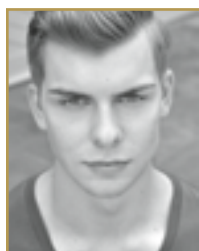
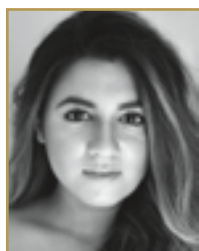
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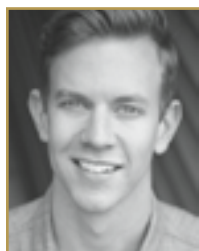
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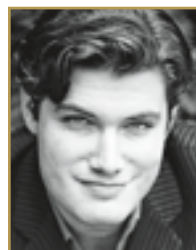


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IN MEMORIAM



BRIAN ASAWA, *Countertenor*

Countertenor Brian Asawa was well known to San Francisco Opera audiences and opera fans around the world. He joined the Merola Opera Program in 1991 and returned in 1992 as an Adler Fellow. He made his Company debut in 1991 with the U.S. premiere of Henze's *Das Verratene Meer* and in 1992 scored a huge critical success as Oberon in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. San Francisco Opera audiences also heard him as the Shepherd Boy in *Tosca*, Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, and as an unforgettable Baba the Turk in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* (pictured here). His last performance on the War Memorial Opera House stage was during the 2000–01 Season opposite Ruth Ann Swenson in *Semele*. Asawa's wide-ranging discography included *Encountertenor*, a song cycle written for him by Jake Heggie and included on Heggie's 1999 disc *The Faces of Love*, as well as a recital album of Ned Rorem songs. General Director Emeritus David Gockley mourned Asawa's passing: "Brian's entry into the Merola Opera Program in 1991 was a bold move and occurred as part of a new wave of countertenors returning to opera companies nationwide. He was a remarkable artist who commanded the stage with his beautiful voice and theatrical presence."



JOHAN BOTHA, *Tenor*

Acclaimed South African tenor Johan Botha sang with the world's most distinguished opera companies, including Vienna State Opera; Milan's Teatro alla Scala; London's Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Bayreuth Festival; Munich's Bavarian State Opera; Lyric Opera of Chicago; and New York's Metropolitan Opera. His broad repertory encompassed the title roles of *Don Carlo* and *Tannhäuser*, Walther in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Calaf in *Turandot*, and Florestan in *Fidelio*. Botha gave the Bay Area one of the most remarkable performances of *Otello* in recent years; in November 2009, he made his sole appearance with San Francisco Opera in the title role of Verdi's opera (pictured here). Company Music Director Nicola Luisotti led the cast which included soprano Zvetelina Vassileva as Desdemona and baritone Marco Vratogna as Iago in a production by Peter Hall. "I worked with Johan from the very beginning of my career in 1994 with a performance of Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* in Catania, Italy," said Maestro Luisotti. "I had the great pleasure of working with him in many operas in Europe and, of course, here in San Francisco. He had a stunning voice, a fresh sound, and he was capable of singing almost anything in the operatic repertoire."



BEVERLEY DENEBEIM, *Philanthropist*

Beverley Denebeim dedicated her life to community volunteerism, forging close friendships through the many Bay Area organizations which benefitted from her considerable talents and energy. Born in 1929 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Denebeim grew up in Kansas City, Missouri and graduated from the University of Missouri, Columbia. In 1955, she and her husband Bruce Kelnly Denebeim moved to San Francisco where they raised their five children. Denebeim joined San Francisco Opera Guild in 1978 and immediately took on significant leadership roles, serving as Guild President from 1980 to 1982. During her presidency, she oversaw the 1981 Fol de Rol, which celebrated the retirement of General Director Kurt Herbert Adler, and then the next year welcomed Terence McEwen on his first season as General Director at the 1982 Fol de Rol. She also served as Vice President of Education, Opera Ball Chair, and Fol de Rol Chair. Along with the Opera Guild, Denebeim donated her time to the Homewood Terrace Orphanage, Stanford Children's Hospital Auxiliary, Commodore Sloat School PTA, Jewish Community Federation, and Merola Opera Program. "She was a dear friend to the Guild and will be missed by all who knew her," said former San Francisco Opera Guild President Charlot D. Malin.



MATTIWILDA DOBBS, *Soprano*

During the 1950s, Mattiwilda Dobbs became the first African-American singer to perform in a leading role at Milan's Teatro alla Scala and the third to appear as a principal singer with the Metropolitan Opera (preceded only by contralto Marian Anderson and baritone Robert McFerrin). But it was in San Francisco that the trail-blazing coloratura soprano made her U.S. operatic debut, as the Queen of Shemarkha in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Le Coq d'Or*, in 1955 (pictured here). Born in Atlanta in 1925, Dobbs pursued voice lessons as an undergraduate at Spelman College. Soon afterward she trained in New York and in Paris where she studied with baritone Pierre Bernac. In addition to her successful operatic career—known especially for her interpretations of Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*—Dobbs was renowned as a recitalist and interpreter of Schubert lieder. Later in life, she served as a teacher and role model for many young singers. Reflecting on how the opera world had changed, in 1994, she commented: "Things are much better. There are so many black opera singers now that I don't know them all."

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



DELIA FLEISHHACKER EHRLICH,
Philanthropist

A longtime benefactor of San Francisco Opera Guild, Delia Ehrlich contributed deeply to the civic and cultural life of the Bay Area. A fourth-generation San Franciscan—the great-granddaughter of Aaron Fleishhacker, a Bavarian immigrant active during the Gold Rush and in the development of the Comstock silver mines—Ehrlich was born in 1930 to parents who were prominent philanthropists. She followed her parents' example through her advocacy for a number of causes, including Tay-Sachs disease (two of her children were afflicted with the fatal genetic condition). Ehrlich was also responsible for the volunteer program at Macy's department store and helped establish Macy's Passport, a fashion fundraiser for HIV/AIDS related programs. In addition to San Francisco Opera, she was a supporter of the Little Jim Club's Mardi Gras Ball, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the Magic Theatre, ARCS (Achievement Rewards for College Scientists Foundation), and served as president of the Fleishhacker Foundation from 1978 to 1988. According to her brother, David Fleishhacker, "She had indomitable energy."



BETTY GUY, *Artist*

Beloved by Opera patrons for her watercolors and beautifully-detailed renderings of dress rehearsals and singers, Betty Guy was a San Francisco native equally celebrated for her commercial art, cityscapes, and contributions to Bay Area arts institutions. After graduating from Lowell High School and earning a bachelor's degree in English literature from San Francisco State University, Guy studied art at the University of California, Berkeley; the Art's Student League in New York; and the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris, France. In 1961, she had her first art show at the Palace of the Legion of Honor. Soon afterward, she became resident artist for Gump's department store, painting the scenery of San Francisco on coasters and other merchandise. She was also resident artist for San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet and the designer of posters and program covers for the San Francisco Symphony. Hundreds of San Francisco Opera patrons have purchased Guy's paintings over the years, the proceeds going to the company she loved with great passion. Nearly every operatic star of the past few decades has been included in her etchings and photography portfolios of autographed portraits. "Her distinctive and cheerful style captured the essence of grand opera and she gloried in the beauty of the War Memorial Opera House," said Opera Shop Retail Manager Jay Stebley.



HARRIET MEYER QUARRÉ,
Philanthropist

A devoted member of the San Francisco Opera Association Board of Directors since 1976, Harriet Quarré came by board service naturally: her father, Wilson Meyer, served on the Board from 1968 to 1973. During her tenure, Quarré founded the Medallion Society as a way to honor San Francisco Opera's most generous patrons, and served as its President from 1983 to 1987. She also served on the boards of the Merola Opera Program and San Francisco Opera Guild, as well as Spring Opera Theater, an arm of the company that often featured young singers in lesser-known works designed to attract new young audiences. Among her many other community efforts, she was a longtime Board Member of The World Affairs Council of Northern California and The International Host Committee. An avid horseback rider her entire life, she once convinced Plácido Domingo to ride a horse in a parade for San Francisco Opera. Her dedication to San Francisco Opera earned her the Spirit of the Opera Award in 2008. General Director Matthew Shilvock reflected, "For me, I'll always remember Harriet's positive outlook and forward-looking energy. For someone who had been associated with the Company as long as she had, she was always eager for us to try new things, connect with younger people, and be bold and adventurous."



ROBERT ROBB, *Administration*

Known as "Doc" to his family and friends, Robert Maria Robb worked in public relations and publications for San Francisco Opera from 1977 to 2002. In recent years, he served as a volunteer for the San Francisco Opera Archives. Born in 1944 in Manila, Philippines, of a Filipino mother and American father, Robb grew up in Detroit and attended Wayne State University. Prior to arriving in California, he taught voice and acting at Wayne State and the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada and performed with a number of regional and summer theaters in the Detroit area. Friends and colleagues warmly recall Robb for his extensive musical knowledge, perfect mimicry of various accents, and deep, resonant voice. "I loved his sense of humor, his willingness to dig in and help out," said former San Francisco Opera Archive Associate Ann Farris. "I could sense he was enjoying being back in the craziness of the Opera House. How happy that made us all."

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

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

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

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

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San Francisco Opera offers family programs, including movie screenings and interactive workshops, throughout the year and all over the Bay Area. Visit sfopera.com/discover-opera.

CHECK OUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA’S BLOG

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

OPERA HOUSE TOURS

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

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

Aida: Marcia Green

Madame Butterfly: Peter Susskind

Rigoletto: Emily Laurance

Don Giovanni: Kayleen Asbo

La Bohème: Laura Prichard

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DREW ALTIZER





Chuck Williams (1915 – 2015), founder of Williams-Sonoma, Inc.

“My advice for a happy life? Love what you do!”

With an unbeatable recipe of quality, kindness and customer service, Chuck Williams created one of the nation’s most iconic retail businesses: Williams-Sonoma. He clearly loved what he did and he saw that same trait in the people who cared for him at Sutter Health’s CPMC. In appreciation, he has made a visionary philanthropic investment — one of the largest in our history — that will enable extraordinary advances in cancer research and treatment at CPMC.

On behalf of the entire community who will benefit from Chuck Williams’ foresight for decades to come, we are forever grateful.

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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—*Andrea Chénier*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Aida*, and *Don Giovanni*.

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

John is the former chairman and CEO of Dodge & Cox

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

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

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

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

DREW ALITZER



Joan and David Traitel/Great Singers Fund (Sponsors, Ekaterina Semenchuk and George Gagnidze, *Aida*; Lianna Haroutounian, *Madame Butterfly*)

“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 2016–17 Season, Joan explains, “There are so many! We are thrilled to be supporting the return of Ekaterina Semenchuk and Lianna Haroutounian,

both superb talents. And we’re excited to hear the great George Gagnidze in a second production during his debut season with San Francisco Opera. 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.”

Burgess & Elizabeth Jamieson Fund (Production Sponsors, *Madame Butterfly*)

Libby and Burgess Jamieson have made an extraordinary commitment to San Francisco Opera over many years by supporting traditional, classical productions. Their special enthusiasm for the works of Puccini has assured a regular presence on the War Memorial Opera House stage for recent, memorable productions of *Il Trittico*, *Turandot*, *Tosca*, and *La Bohème*. Speaking about this season’s production of *Madama Butterfly*, Burgess says, “Libby and I are great fans of the Italian opera tradition, and especially Puccini. It’s a pleasure to sponsor these timeless productions and allow others to fall in love with his enduring stories and music, just as we have.” With over 45 years of experience in private and public investment management, Burgess is active on San Francisco Opera’s Board of Directors and its investment committee.



DREW ALITZER



San Francisco Opera Guild (Production Sponsor, *Aida*) San Francisco Opera Guild supports Bay Area school children, teachers, parents and the extended community through its award-winning arts education and outreach programs. Founded in 1939, San Francisco Opera Guild has acted on its belief that the life lessons drawn from creative expression are the foundation of confidence and integrity by developing programs that extend the impact of opera, bringing it center stage into the life of the community. The Guild’s fundraising events enable more than 50,000 students in nearly 200 schools each year throughout Northern California to find their voices, receiving the benefits of arts education, as only opera can deliver. San Francisco Opera Guild’s Education Fund ensures the continuation of these vital programs. San Francisco Opera Guild also provides interactive opera performances on theater stages throughout the Bay Area, and strives to make opera accessible to all through its opera engagement programs. San Francisco Opera Guild is a proud supporter of San Francisco Opera and a Production Sponsor of *Aida*.

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Chevron (Production Sponsor, *Aida*)

Throughout its long history with San Francisco Opera, Chevron has generously supported many of the company's artistic productions and community outreach initiatives. Continuing this tradition, this season, Chevron is the corporate Production Sponsor of *Aida*. Chevron has a proud history of serving its customers and communities in the Bay Area. Chevron's philosophy of investing in community institutions encourages a culture of artistic achievement and growth, which strengthens the communities in which we live and work. San Francisco Opera is grateful to Chevron for its generous support.



Kaiser Permanente (Performance Sponsor, *Madame Butterfly*)

Kaiser Permanente is committed to providing the best health care possible to its over 10 million members and the communities it serves around the country and in San Francisco. Having been a partner with San Francisco Opera for nearly a decade, Kaiser Permanente is honored to be a performance sponsor of *Madame Butterfly*. Knowing that the arts are an integral part of health and well-being, Kaiser Permanente is proud to support San Francisco Opera in multiple ways including arts education programs, Opera in the Park, and performance sponsorship opportunities. San Francisco Opera is grateful to Kaiser Permanente for its generous support and continued partnership.

Support emerging artists and cutting-edge new works by joining SF Opera Lab Partners, a group of donors dedicated to shaping opera for the 21st century.

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KRISTEN LOKEN

Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem

As Jan Shrem explains, “For Maria, it is all about the artists. Though I had loved opera for years before I met her, it was Maria who opened my eyes to the dedication and sacrifice of the artists.” Last year, Jan and Maria significantly 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* helps ensure the continued appearances of Maestro Nicola Luisotti and other Italian conductors, and the *Emerging Stars Fund* helps bring some of opera's most exciting rising young talents to the stage.

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

The *Emerging Stars* of San Francisco Opera's 2016–17 season include virtuoso singers like J'Nai Bridges, David Pershall, Lawrence Brownlee, Vincenzo Costanzo, and Anthony Clark Evans, all making their Company debuts. Also featured are returning Company favorites, Heidi Stober, Brian Jagde, and Leah Crocetto. What does it take to be an *Emerging Star*? In the Shrems' view, a beautiful voice, a good ear, strong acting skills, and the ability to perform from the heart. At the end of the 2016–17 season, one artist will be selected for his or her superlative season performance by a process that includes the general public, the artistic staff of the Company and the Shrems.

General Director Matthew Shilvock states, “Maria and Jan have an incredible sensitivity to the needs of artists and a passion for seeing young artists succeed and grow into the next generation of stars. It is a pleasure to partner with them on the Emerging Stars program and to celebrate the finest voices making an impact on the world. San Francisco Opera has always been one of the great nurturers of new voices, and this program helps us take that even further.”

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

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



DREW ALTIZER



DREW ALTIZER

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

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

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DISCOVER THE MAGIC



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

San Francisco Opera has two fantastic opportunities for young professionals between the ages of 21–40. Whether you're interested in discounted tickets, invitations to rehearsals or exclusive events, we invite you to get involved!

BRAVO! CLUB



San Francisco Opera's young professional group, BRAVO! CLUB, is a dedicated group of over 1,000 Bay Area young professionals ages 21–40. Members enjoy access to discounted tickets, educational and social events throughout the year, while helping to build the future audience for San Francisco Opera. Memberships cost \$75 and include the following benefits:

DISCOUNTED TICKETS

\$37 Dress Circle & \$52 Orchestra tickets through BRAVO! Tix.

FREE ADMISSION

Members enjoy free admission to social and educational events—check out our website for upcoming events!

COMPLIMENTARY PRE-SHOW RECEPTIONS

Build a community around going to the Opera and enjoy complimentary receptions prior to three operas each season.

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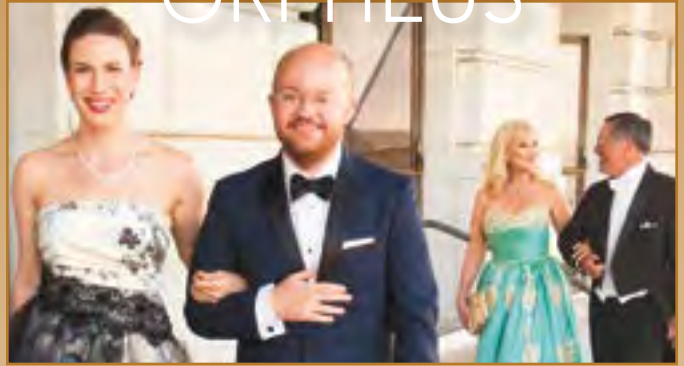
Only BRAVO! members can purchase tickets to high-profile events, like the annual BRAVO! Opening Night Gala.

2016 BRAVO! CLUB Board of Directors: Lauren Groff (President), Kyle Brisby, Laurie Diab, Shannon Eliot, Jorge Jaramillo, Nicole Jiam, Rachel Lem, Kari Lincks, Benjamin Russell Osgood, Alexander Petalas, Susan Walker and Victoria Weatherford.

For more information or to join:

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ORPHEUS



Orpheus members form a dynamic community of young donors who share a passion for opera and a belief in its future. Every gift to Orpheus enables San Francisco Opera to create, innovate, and share this remarkable art form with the widest possible audiences. Orpheus gifts are eligible to be matched, which makes that much more of a difference!

Join Orpheus and lead the next generation of opera supporters.

GREAT PERKS

In addition to a variety of social and networking events for young donors, members enjoy complimentary memberships to both BRAVO! CLUB and the Medallion Society, with benefits including complimentary subscription series parking, ticket exchanges, and invitations to exclusive events and rehearsals.

MAXIMIZE YOUR IMPACT

Make a membership gift between \$500 and \$1,500 (depending on your age between 21–40) and your gift could be eligible for a match of up to 5 to 1 through the Orpheus Matching Fund*.

**The Orpheus Matching Fund is generously provided by Marina & Ben Nelson, with additional support from Koret Foundation, Teresa & Mark Medearis, and Lisa P. Lindef.*

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2016–17 REPERTORY

ANDREA CHÉNIER

Umberto Giordano

September 9, 14, 17, 22, 25, 30

Production made possible, in part, by:

Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey;

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn and Barbara A. Wolfe.

DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER

WORLD PREMIERE

Music by Bright Sheng

Libretto by David Henry Hwang and Bright Sheng

September 10, 13, 18, 23, 27, 29

Production made possible, in part, by:

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn;

the Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund;

grants from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and

the National Endowment for the Arts;

OPERA America's Opera Fund; and United Airlines.

Dream of the Red Chamber commission initiated and funded by the Chinese Heritage Foundation Friends of Minnesota, with leadership support from the Dr. M. F. Tchou Memorial Fund of the Chinese Heritage Foundation, Benjamin Y. H. and Helen C. Liu, and Ruth Stricker and the late Bruce Dayton.

DON PASQUALE

Gaetano Donizetti

September 28; October 2, 4, 7, 12, 15

Production made possible, in part, by Leslie & George Hume.

THE MAKROPULOS CASE

Leoš Janáček

October 14, 18, 23, 26, 29

Revival made possible, in part, by: The Bernard Osher Endowment Fund;

The Thomas Tilton Production Fund. Original production made

possible by the Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for New Productions.

AIDA

Giuseppe Verdi

November 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 27, 30; December 3, 6

Production sponsored, in part, by:

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn; Roberta & David Elliott;

Keith & Priscilla Geeslin; San Francisco Opera Guild, and Chevron.

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Giacomo Puccini

November 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 22, 26, 29; December 1, 4

Production made possible, in part, by

the Burgess & Elizabeth Jamieson Fund, and Kaiser Permanente.

RIGOLETTO

Giuseppe Verdi

May 31; June 6, 9, 14, 18, 22, 27; July 1

Production made possible, in part, by The Bernard Osher Endowment Fund.

DON GIOVANNI

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

June 4, 8, 11, 13, 16, 21, 24, 30

Production made possible, in part by John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn.

LA BOHÈME

Giacomo Puccini

June 10, 15, 17, 20, 23, 25, 29; July 2

Production made possible, in part, by the Burgess & Elizabeth Jamieson Fund.

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Giuseppe Verdi

AIDA

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Matthew Shilvock,
General Director

Nicola Luisotti,
Music Director

Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair



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Ms. Crocetto's and Mr. Jagde's appearances are made possible
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AIDA

ACT I

Radames, an officer in the Egyptian army, learns that rival forces are advancing on his city. He speculates that if he can lead the troops in a conclusive victory for Egypt, the king will allow him the prize he seeks—Aida. Currently enslaved to the Egyptian princess Amneris, Aida is the daughter of Amonasro, who is leading the attack on Egypt. For her own safety, Aida is secretly in love with Radames and keeping her identity hidden. When Radames is named commander of the Egyptian army, Aida is distraught: the upcoming battle will pit her lover against her father.

ACT II

The Egyptian princess Amneris is also in love with Radames, although he is indifferent to her. Suspicious, Amneris tricks Aida into revealing her feelings for the Egyptian commander. Meanwhile, Radames leads the Egyptians to victory. When they return, Amonasro, Aida's father, is among the prisoners of war. Aida rushes to greet him; he cautions her not to reveal their royal identity. Amonasro then pleads with the Egyptians for clemency. Radames is in favor of granting Amonasro's request, but Ramfis, the Egyptian high priest, disagrees. After hearing both sides, the Egyptian king revokes Amonasro's death sentence, but keeps him in custody. The king declares that the victorious Radames will be granted the hand of his daughter, Amneris, in marriage—an offer Radames cannot safely refuse.

ACT III

Aida, preparing for a secret rendezvous with Radames, is surprised by her father, who asks her to obtain strategic information from her lover. Initially she refuses, but Amonasro appeals to her loyalty and patriotism. When Radames appears, Aida tricks him into revealing the Egyptian army's plans. Amonasro emerges from his hiding place triumphant, and Radames is distraught over his unwitting treachery. He surrenders himself to Ramfis, the high priest.

ACT IV

Amneris offers to save Radames' life if he will renounce Aida, but Radames is firm in his love. Condemned to death by entombment, he prepares to spend his last moments in solitude, but Aida finds her way to him. If she cannot share her life with Radames, she will die with him. They will be together for eternity.

First performance: Cairo Opera House; December 24, 1871

First performance in the U.S.: New York, Academy of Music; November 26, 1873

First San Francisco Opera performance: October 3, 1925

Aida has been performed in 32 previous seasons at San Francisco Opera.

For complete information on all past casts, visit archive.sfopera.com.

Personnel: 8 principals, 80 choristers, 10 dancers, 20 supernumeraries: **118 total**

Orchestra: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 1 English horn, 2 clarinets, 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 cimbasso, 1 timpani, 2 percussion, 2 harps; 40 strings (12 first violins, 9 second violins, 7 violas, 7 cellos, 5 basses): **66 total**

Onstage musicians: 6 herald trumpets

Backstage musicians: 5 trumpets, 3 horns, 1 baritone horn, 2 trombones, 1 tuba

Conductor
Nicola Luisotti
Jordi Bernàcer (12/6)

Director
Francesca Zambello

Associate Director
E. Loren Meeker

Artistic Designer
RETNA*

Set Designer
Michael Yeargan

Costume Designer
Anita Yavich

Lighting Designer
Mark McCullough

Choreographer
Jessica Lang*

Associate Choreographer
Clifton Brown*

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation
Bryndon Hassman,
Ronny Michael Greenberg†,
Tamara Sanikidze, Dennis Doubin,
John Churchwell, Fabrizio Corona

Prompter
Robert Mollicone

Assistant Directors
Shawna Lucey, Jimmy Marcheso

Stage Manager
Lisa Anderson

Dance Master
Lawrence Pech

Fight Director
Dave Maier

Assistant Stage Managers
Lisa-Marie Shuster, Jayme O'Hara,
E. Reed Fisher, Jodi Gage

Costume Supervisor
Jai Alltizer

Head of Wig and Makeup
Jeanna Parham

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2016 AT 7:30 PM
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8 AT 7:30 PM
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11 AT 7:30 PM
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14 AT 7:30 PM
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17 AT 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20 AT 2 PM
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23 AT 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27 AT 2 PM
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30 AT 7:30 PM
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3 AT 7:30 PM
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6 AT 7:30 PM

Opera in four acts by **Giuseppe Verdi**
Libretto by **Antonio Ghislanzoni**

AIDA

(Sung in Italian with English supertitles)

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Radames</i>	Brian Jagde
<i>Ramfis</i>	Raymond Aceto
<i>Amneris</i>	Ekaterina Semenchuk
<i>Aida</i>	Leah Crocetto
<i>The King of Egypt</i>	Anthony Reed†
<i>A Messenger</i>	Pene Pati†
<i>A Priestess</i>	Toni Marie Palmertree†
<i>Solo Dancers</i>	Rachel Little Jekyuns Peláez
<i>Amonasro</i>	George Gagnidze

Priests, soldiers, officials, foreign prisoners, Egyptian populace

*San Francisco Opera debut †Current Adler Fellow

ACT I, SCENE 1: War room in the King's palace

ACT I, SCENE 2: The Temple of Ptah

ACT II, SCENE 1: Amneris' apartment in the palace

ACT II, SCENE 2: A public square

—INTERMISSION—

ACT III: The banks of the Nile, outside the Temple of Isis

ACT IV, SCENE 1: The judgment hall

ACT IV, SCENE 2: A tomb

*Latecomers may not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed.
Patrons who leave during the performance may not be re-seated until 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 two hours and fifty-five minutes.

AIDA

as Chamber Opera

The Triumphal Scene is *Aida*'s monumental set-piece, its most famous excerpt, the big moment guaranteed to elicit gasps and sustained applause from the audience, even if the rest of the performance is miserably sung. It is also the most incongruous segment of the entire opera.

When I was growing up, the term “grand opera” was synonymous with *Aida*, but apart from the fact that the term itself seems old-fashioned today, it is in many ways wrongly applied to Verdi's masterpiece. *Aida* is one of the most profoundly intimate works the composer ever created, an opera dominated by searching private dialogues between individuals. Quite beyond its diverting dose of spectacle, the Triumphal Scene serves a definite dramatic purpose: to show the ways in which matters of state (and later in the opera, matters of religion, which here amount to the same thing) ultimately trample the concerns of individuals.

Any production of *Aida* is doomed to fail unless it gets across the central idea that Verdi and his early collaborator, Camille du Locle, were grappling with: individuals pushing against events and traditions that are finally much bigger than they are. This concept was quite literally illustrated when the Metropolitan Opera premiered the Sonja Frisell-Gianni Quaranta staging of *Aida* in 1988, the one that still remains in that company's repertory. Aida, Radames, Amneris, and Amonasro shuffle almost pitifully, like insects, before a background of ancient Egyptian temples and tombs that shoot up above the proscenium, out of sight of the audience.

These were dramatic concerns that had occupied Verdi in his previous opera *Don Carlos*, which had its premiere at the Paris Opéra in 1867, four years before *Aida* reached the stage. Verdi's difficulties with Paris, both with *Don Carlos* and with *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* back in 1855, were legion. After his disappointing experience with *Don Carlos*, Verdi decided that his goals as a composer were incompatible with the massive theatrical machine that the Paris Opéra had become, and he returned to Italy. In the next few years, he considered and rejected other possible subjects until he came across a synopsis that Camille Du Locle had written, based on a story by Egyptologist Auguste Mariette, about an Ethiopian slave girl, an Egyptian princess, and the Egyptian military hero they both love. Mariette had hopes that it could be transformed into an opera to coincide with the opening of the Suez Canal. (In her comprehensive biography of Verdi, Mary Jane Phillips-Matz presents compelling evidence that Temistocle Solera is actually the author of *Aida*.) The deadline has passed by the time Du Locle brought the synopsis to Verdi's attention in 1870, but the composer agreed to work on it with great speed, planning it for an 1871 premiere at the Cairo Opera House where Verdi was revered; the theater had opened two years earlier with a production of *Rigoletto*. Du Locle wrote a libretto in French, which Verdi demanded be translated into Italian by Antonio Ghislanzoni, the former journalist who had collaborated with the composer on the 1869 revision of *La Forza del Destino*.

Aida bowed in Cairo, almost a year later than anticipated, on December 24, 1871, and at Milan's La Scala a few weeks later, and was a rousing success in both places. The opera has contin-

Verdi was concerned first and foremost with human plight and struggle; it's precisely what made him the superb musical dramatist that he was.

ued an uninterrupted record of worldwide success ever since, one of the most popular operas in the repertoire, racking up (as of this writing) 116 performances at San Francisco Opera. Although it once attracted huge audiences in Rome, through its spectacular summer performances at the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, where live animals were paraded through in the Triumphal Scene, it is still the work's intimacy, rather than its grandeur, that takes hold of us most powerfully.

The spell is cast in the prelude, where we encounter the two themes that will engage in a duel throughout the opera. The love of Aida and Radames is introduced by *pianissimo* violins. There is something exquisitely tentative and fragile about this theme, contrasted with the next one we hear—the intensely grim music associated with the priests, softly but insistently played by the cellos. The Aida/Radames theme generally lifts upward, while the second theme moves rigidly and oppressively downward.

This juxtaposition continues throughout. Aida's first aria, "Ritorna vincitor," is not an expression of defiance (as we sometimes might assume after listening to young sopranos who perform it out of context in singing competitions). Again, it is a highly introspective moment, all the more so for coming immediately off a thundering ensemble in which the King exhorts the Egyptian Army, under Radames' leadership, to victory over the Ethiopians. The aria is partially an expression of the self-loathing that Aida's bitter dilemma churns up: "Ritorna vincitor! E dal mio

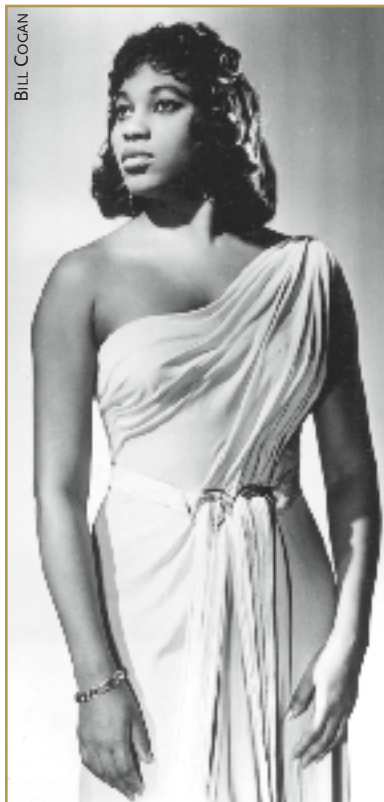
labbro uscì l'empia parola!" ("Return the conqueror! And from my own lips came that impious word!") The aria begins with great agitation, then turns quietly inward, its subdued instrumentation underpinning the delicate "Numi, pietà del mio soffrir!" ("Gods have pity on my suffering!"). As music critic and journalist Charles Osborne points out, "Most of the music for its three principal characters, Aida, Radames and Amneris, is scored with the clarity of texture of chamber music."

This sensitive approach to orchestration is also heard in the shimmering, evocative opening pages of Act III's Nile Scene, and in "O patria mia," with the oboe triplets that achingly accompany Aida as she ascends to a sweetly floated high C. And it is there in "O terra addio," the final duet in which Aida and Radames are entombed together. Apart from the Triumphal Scene, the scoring only becomes truly inflamed toward the end of "Già i sacerdoti adunansi," the blazing Amneris/Radames duet in Act IV, and at the end of the great Judgment Scene, in which Amneris waits in agony as the priests decide Radames' fate. Even here, however, the focus is intensely personal, and the point of view inspired: rather than put us in the room with the priests, Verdi, Du Locle, and Ghislanzoni allowed us to experience it from the outside, along with Amneris. What overwhelms us about this scene is how paralyzingly alone Amneris is at this moment. It's a master stroke that a filmmaker such as Val Lewton or Alfred Hitchcock surely would have admired: what we *don't* see and hear contributes immeasurably to

Images by Los Angeles artist RETNA were an important inspiration behind this new production of Aida. RETNA's 2015 painting I Only See Systematics is integrated into the set design of Act II.



Clockwise from the top: Soprano Leontyne Price made her role debut as *Aida* with San Francisco Opera in 1957; tenor Luciano Pavarotti made his role debut as Radames with the Company's 1981 production; the Act II Finale from the last time San Francisco mounted Verdi's masterpiece, in 2010.



BILL COGAN



ROBERT CAHEN

our own anxiety. Ramfis accusingly proclaims Radames' name on an A, then twice more, in eerily escalating half-tones, and the scene ends with the orchestra whipped into a full *fortissimo* fury.

Aida has certain links with its immediate predecessor in Verdi's canon, *Don Carlos*, particularly in the doomed love triangle. *Aida*'s divided loyalties between Radames and Amonasro, so deeply plumbed in the Nile Scene, are akin to the torment Don Carlos experiences when he must surrender his betrothed, Elisabeth de Valois, to his father, Philip II. But it is the battle between the individual and authority that truly unites the two operas. The Judgment Scene, with the relentlessly foursquare music signifying the power of the priests, is apt to call to mind the ominous chords of the Grand Inquisitor Scene in Act IV of *Don Carlos*. With its large chorus in the Fontainebleau act and its *auto-da-fé* scene, *Don Carlos* is more obviously a grand opera, but both works show people pushing in vain against all-powerful religious institutions, desperately trying to sort out where their ultimate responsibilities lie, in ways that are practically Shakespearean in scope.

In spite of all this emphasis on the character's internal battles, nothing will ever prevent audiences from wanting to view *Aida* as a big, colorful show. Obviously, the opera delivers on that level as well. But many lovers of the opera—including a number of music critics—seem to want their *Aida* heavy on fire and bombast. This came to light in 2001 when Nikolaus Harnoncourt led the Vienna Philharmonic in a recording of the opera that was met with its share of critical scorn. *Gramophone* complained about the conductor's "slow speeds" (which in truth were sometimes very close to what Verdi indicated), the weak leads as *Aida* and Radames, and the overall



CORY WEAVER

lack of Italianate flavor. Some of this criticism was legitimate, but it was refreshing to hear the orchestration revealed in such transparent detail. And it served as a reminder that Verdi was concerned first and foremost with human plight and struggle; it's precisely what made him the superb musical dramatist that he was. 🌟

Brian Kellow is the author of biographies of Ethel Merman and Pauline Kael, and the most recent book Can I Go Now?: The Life of Sue Mengers, Hollywood's First Superagent.

MADAME BUTTERFLY

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Photos: Madame Butterfly, Rigoletto, La Bohème/San Francisco Opera/Cory Weaver; Don Giovanni/San Diego Opera/Cory Weaver

When *Aida* Conquered The Silver Screen

The 1953 motion picture is considered today a landmark in the opera-film genre

ALAMY

Released in 1953, Clemente Fracassi's cinematic version of *Aida* has been almost forgotten; however, it has acquired cult status among opera fans. Its fame among connoisseurs is due to some aspects that render it unique: it was the first opera film in color and, even more impressively, it featured *two* divas portraying the title role—a young and then unknown Sophia Loren, in her first performance using her popular stage name, and soprano Renata Tebaldi, at the peak of her career, lending her voice to the lip-synching Italian actress.

“The grandest of all grand operas!”—as one of the advertising tag lines for Fracassi's film proclaimed—was perfectly suited for the big screen, with a plotline highlighting the tensions of the personal versus the political, and with its unparalleled scenic and choreographic potential. Produced by Oscar Film and distributed by CEI Incom, Fracassi's *Aida* had a successful debut in Italy and was one of the top ten most viewed films of 1953. It premiered in the United States the following year where, as in Italy, it received mostly positive reviews in major media outlets, from *Variety* to *The New York Times*.

The film was acclaimed for its agile cinematography, its flamboyant theatricality, and its democratizing mission of bringing operatic works to a wider public. However, there were differing and

sometimes unfavorable opinions, especially regarding the editing choices of music supervisor Renzo Rossellini. For instance, some critics found unforgivable the reduction of Verdi's grand opera to a mere 95 minutes—cutting out entire numbers and shortening others—as well as the interjection of a voice-over narrating pivotal plot developments. And yet, even the most critical voices acknowledged that the vocal performances in the film were superb, as well as the conducting of Giuseppe Morelli who led the Chorus and the Orchestra Sinfonica della RAI in the film's soundtrack.

In the late 1940s and early '50s, the opera-film genre was at its climax: in 1953 alone, the same year in which *Aida* was released, two other opera-inspired films made the box office top ten in Italy, Raffaello Matarazzo's *Giuseppe Verdi* and Carmine Gallone's *Puccini*. The commercial success of these films was due to new technologies which made it possible to achieve spectacular effects that attracted new audiences—who often could not make it to the opera house for economic or geographic reasons—to movie theaters.

Like many other films based on operatic works, *Aida* was not filmed in an opera house. The shooting took place only partly on location and, mainly, in the Scalera studios in Rome, under the supervision of production designer Flavio Mogherini. Orientalist tropes in the

set design and costumes, as well as the use of blackface (for the title role, for instance), are exploited in this production, reflecting ethnocentric biases. The choreography was created by Margarete Wallmann, who had been serving as ballet director of Milan's Teatro alla Scala since 1949. For this production, she choreographed the ballet of the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma in elegant harmony with the architectural elements of the King's palace in which most of the film is set.

The casting of Sophia Loren in the title role is striking. Her affinity with the operatic world was not new. In 1952, under her first stage name Sofia Lazzaro, she had starred in a black-and-white film adaptation of Donizetti's *La Favorita*, directed by Cesare Barlacchi. As was the case with *Aida*, she had been dubbed by a singer, soprano Palmira Vitali Marini. In her autobiography, Loren speaks with passion about the demands of portraying Aida, a role that required not only memorizing her lines but also syncing them to the recording. She recalls not having much time to familiarize herself with the libretto: "to be able to concentrate and learn my part quickly and thoroughly, I would lock myself inside the small office of the production studio, in the freezing cold of winter." She also describes the difficult conditions in which the cast and crew found themselves: "Neither the office nor the set had any heating, and it was so cold that I could see my breath. So before each take, they'd make me chew ice to lessen the puff of cloud that emerged whenever I'd say my lines. And they had one of the stagehands follow me around with a hair dryer out of range of the camera's frame!" Her comments shed light on the Italian film industry in the decade after the end of World War II. Even for an ambitious production such as that of a film-opera, practical difficulties remained.

While being candid about the challenges she faced preparing for this role, Loren also shows profound respect for the soprano: "Providing Renata Tebaldi's voice with a body was a special emotion for me, and one that would be hard to repeat. In the end, we were like one person." Her comments highlight one of the distinctive features of this film: a harmonious relationship between Loren and Tebaldi comes to the fore, allowing the character of Aida to truly shine.

The actress was not the only one to acknowledge that special affinity. Tebaldi, as

well, recalled the exceptionality of the encounter between her vocal rendition and Loren's interpretation when, years later, she commented fondly on Loren's performance: "Sophia was very beautiful [...]. When I previewed the film for which I sang the title role, I was amazed at her ability. The voice dubbing was not noticeable, not even in close-ups!" Loren's interpretation also earned the praises of Vittorio De Sica, who would later invite her to star in several of his films, including his Academy Award-winning *La Ciociara* (*Two Women*, 1960).

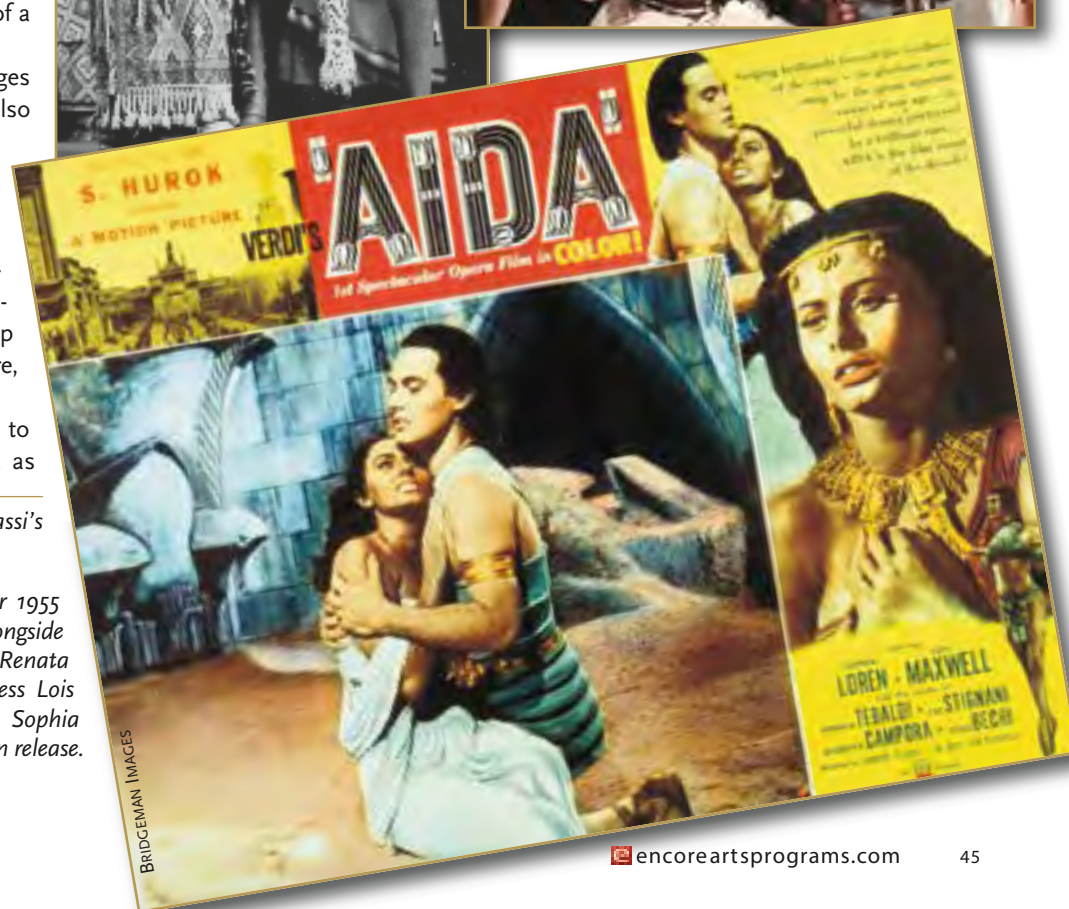
The presence of the Italian diva is not the only reason this film is remarkable. Together with Loren we find another rising star, Canadian actress Lois Maxwell who, in later years, would be known for her portrayal of Miss Money Penny in fourteen of the James Bond films. Living in Rome at the time, Maxwell was cast as Amneris, lip-synching the voice of mezzo-soprano Ebe Stignani. Stignani's Amneris also represents an exceptional vocal treat: the Egyptian princess was one of her signature roles and she had recorded it just a few years earlier, in 1946, together with Maria Caniglia and Beniamino Gigli, directed by Tullio



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ARCHIVES



BRIDGEMAN IMAGES



BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Left: The Act II Triumphal Scene in Fracassi's 1953 film *Aida*.

Right, clockwise from top: Seen here in her 1955 San Francisco Opera appearance as Aida (alongside Leonard Warren as Amonasro), soprano Renata Tebaldi lent her voice to the '53 film; actress Lois Maxwell as Amneris and the 19-year-old Sophia Loren as Aida; a poster for the film's American release.

Serafin; and then again in 1952, in an acclaimed rendition conducted by Alberto Erede, featuring Mario Del Monaco and Tebaldi herself.

Loren's *Aida* and Maxwell's Amneris offer the strongest dramatic performances in the film, giving life to the tragedy of the two women. Perhaps the most touching moment is the confrontation in Act II, in which Amneris tricks Aida into revealing her forbidden love for Radames, whom Amneris also loves. (Italian actor Luciano Della Marra portrays Radames in the movie with tenor Giuseppe Campora singing the part.) "Figlia de' vinti, il suo dolor m'è sacro" ("Daughter of the conquered, to me her grief is sacred"), Amneris utters softly at the beginning of the scene, as if whispering to herself and showing pity towards the fate of the Ethiopian slave. And yet, a close-up of Maxwell's Amneris, sitting on a sofa in her chambers and surrounded by her servants, unveils a different dimension: Amneris' gaze is stern and menacing. She stands still while following Aida with her eyes, as the latter approaches her to adorn her with a golden necklace. Enveloped in cold shades of turquoise, Amneris is fierce and determined. Aida, in contrast, moves across the room, her eyes lowered, and her figure is characterized by warm colors, yellow and orange tones. A princess enslaved by the Egyptians, she seems to inhabit a different world until Amneris' words about Radames' presumed death bring her violently back to the reality of her captivity. Tebaldi's and Stignani's voices paint the aural space with emotional drama and make this scene one of the most powerful in the film.

After its triumphant Italian release, the film received the attention of international distributors. *Aida* reached the United States thanks to the efforts of renowned impresario Sol Hurok and it was distributed by I.F.E. Releasing Corporation. One of the most influential and respected music professionals of his day, Hurok was particularly proud of his achievement of bringing this *Aida* to the American public: "This is the first time in my career that I have presented a motion picture. I have done so because I believe that this film has made a spectacular advance in translating opera from stage to screen."

The New York release of *Aida*, on November 11, 1954 at the Little Carnegie Theater, was heralded as a special event by the American press. The reason was because of a fascinating coincidence: just a few days earlier, on November 8, a live telecast of the opening night at the Metropolitan Opera, also featuring scenes from Verdi's *Aida*, was screened in 32 theaters across the country. The two events represented an important occasion for presenting operatic works to a wider audience and inspired a reflection on how the cinematic medium could convey opera performances. In reporting the double-event of Fracassi's *Aida* and the live telecast from the Met, respected movie critic Bosley Crowther wrote in *The New York Times*: "This amazingly convenient opportunity to see and compare within three days the best that the present technical facilities of the two media of theatrical transmission can avail provoked some striking reminders of the basic nature of the art of cinema, to which it is reasonable to imagine that the producers of theatrical telecasts eventually aspire."

Since no official soundtrack was released, the only way to enjoy this excellent performance is to watch this cinematic incarnation of *Aida*. To 21st-century sensibilities, accustomed to breathtaking special effects and extravagant productions, it is perhaps hard to imagine what tremendous emotional impact a film such as *Aida* might have had on spectators in the 1950s. Yet, watching this movie, and witnessing the actors' performances brought to musical life by the memorable renditions by Tebaldi and her colleagues, we are reminded of the many shapes in which opera can be a vehicle for poignant, captivating storytelling—through different media and across generations. ●

Marina Romani is a film and music researcher and performer, trained in Western classical voice and Afro-Caribbean music. Her areas of specialization include opera, Italian cinema, and the history and politics of performance.

More about *Aida* and Opera on Screen

RECORDINGS & VIDEOS

Clemente Fracassi's *Aida* (DVD, Qualiton, 1953). There are no subtitles for the sung parts, but English subtitles are available for the narrating voice-over.

Aida (CD, Decca, 1952). Even if no official soundtrack was released for Fracassi's *Aida*, two of the voices from the film, Renata Tebaldi (*Aida*) and Ebe Stignani (*Amneris*), are among the leading singers of this recording. Conducted by Alberto Erede and featuring the Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia, this rendition was praised for the intensity of Tebaldi's and Stignani's performances. It also includes the excellent Mario Del Monaco as Radames and Aldo Protti as Amonasro.

Aida (DVD, Arthaus Musik, 1986). While the quality of the recording lacks technical sophistication, this film version remains a spectacular achievement. Directed by theater legend Luca Ronconi, it features an exceptional Luciano Pavarotti as Radames. Conductor Lorin Maazel, who leads the Orchestra and Chorus of Teatro alla Scala, offers a nuanced and intense reading of the Verdi score.

Aida (DVD, Deutsche Grammophon, 1989). From the Metropolitan Opera, this Emmy-winning production has strong performances by Aprile Millo in the title role and Plácido Domingo as Radames, with Dolora Zajick as a touching and powerful Amneris. James Levine conducts the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus.

BOOKS

Ken Wlaschin, *Encyclopedia of Opera on Screen* (Yale University Press, 2004). This is a comprehensive guide featuring an alphabetical list of major operas and singers from 1896 to the early 2000s. While the volume does not contain a detailed analysis of each specific work, it remains an important source to learn about operas filmed for the small and big screens.

Marcia J. Citron, *When Opera Meets Film* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). This fascinating work will be of particular interest to those who are curious about learning how operatic and film works can influence each other aesthetically and imaginatively.

Louis Bayman, *The Operatic and the Everyday in Post-war Italian Film Melodrama* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014). Focusing on both famous masterpieces (such as Luchino Visconti's films) and lesser-known works, this insightful and accessible study addresses the operatic dimension in Italian cinema.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

BY FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO

As an opera lover, *Aida* is part of the fabric of my being. I first experienced it with huge forces, but as I have come to work on it many times as an adult, I realized it is actually a chamber piece with a huge Triumphal Scene parked in the middle of the story. As a director, I know you need some spectacle, but what is crucial to me in this opera is to dig into the intimate scenes where the conflict of the four main characters drive the drama forward: Aida, the Ethiopian slave in captivity; her father, Amonasro, King of Ethiopia and a prisoner of war; Amneris, daughter of the King of Egypt; and Radames, Egyptian warrior, all caught in a love triangle and a bitter war.

The most famous scene of the opera, the Triumphal Scene, is where we think of the hordes and the elephants, but what is more powerful is to focus on the four individual dramas. There are very few moments when the characters of *Aida* sing solo pieces. But when they do, we feel a struggle inside each of their introspective moments. With so few arias we are always experiencing the grand emotions of love and war through duets and trios. The story brilliantly sets the individuals and their passions against the context of a society out of their control. I call this the “duty versus desire” problem, something most people are always confronting. Here, though, the stakes are very high.

When we went to work on the designs, we chose to collaborate with Marquis Duriel Lewis (aka RETNA). His work is inspired by calligraphy and hieroglyphics, using bold colors and shapes to evoke a mythic past with a contemporary edge. RETNA created a series of structural works, paintings, and images which set designer Michael Yeargan turned into the theatrical spaces. With costume designer Anita Yavich, we tried to complement the power of RETNA's work with a rich color palette and costumes which felt like another time and, in other ways, very recent. The movement of the dance uses the language of war and religious ritual.

As I write this in the middle of the rehearsal process, I am still convinced that *Aida* is a chamber opera. The protagonists and their complex and heartrending personal traumas set against the background of war and religious absolutism make for a passionate Verdi score and drama. This opera lives in a world of emotions, of individuals faced with love, duty, jealousy, and hatred, as well as individuals caught up in emotions they cannot master, and that lead ultimately to a tragic end. The end feels like Wagner's *Liebestod* as Aida and Radames are joined in an eternal death.

ARTISTIC DESIGNER'S NOTE

BY RETNA (MARQUIS DURIEL LEWIS)

I was in Miami one afternoon with a longtime art dealer of mine, Marsea Goldberg. She had just gotten off the phone with Francesca Zambello. Marsea was very excited and told me that the artistic director of the Washington National Opera had expressed interest in meeting with me about a possible collaboration for the opera *Aida*.

All of a sudden the images of ancient Egypt coming to life onstage enveloped my mind. My past influences that I had seen in books, museums, and in my mind started to unravel visually. The honor and bewilderment that I felt knowing that my symbols had communicated the past and that I was now being asked to participate in *Aida* were just beyond me.

We ventured to Washington, D.C. to meet this ambassador of the arts, Francesca Zambello. I had no experience with opera, but I recalled moments in my childhood when I starred in a few plays and my excitement grew as I realized I was never far off my mark.

Having my artwork, much of which is based on the structure of Egyptian hieroglyphics, used for *Aida* turned my entire concept of my career full circle, marking a milestone in my career and artistic and spiritual development.

ARTIST PROFILES



NICOLA LUISOTTI
(Viareggio, Italy)
Conductor

Maestro Luisotti has been music director of San Francisco Opera since 2009 and has conducted

over 40 operas and concerts since his Company debut in 2005. Luisotti, who holds the Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair, recently conducted the Company's *Andrea Chénier*, *Opera in the Park* concert, and *Don Carlo*. During the 2015–16 season, he led a symphonic concert at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and was on the podium at Madrid's Teatro Real for *Rigoletto*. He returned to Milan's Teatro alla Scala to conduct performances of *Rigoletto*, followed by London's Royal Opera, Covent Garden for *Il Trittico* and *La Traviata*, and Paris for a new production of *Rigoletto* at Opéra Bastille. Luisotti's international credits and acclaim from press and public alike include performances with the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice, La Fenice in Venice, Bologna's Teatro Comunale, Bavarian State Opera in Munich, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Dresden, Hamburg, Valencia, Los Angeles Opera, Seattle Opera, and Tokyo's Suntory Hall. Later this season, Maestro Luisotti will lead *La Traviata* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Pagliacci* at Teatro Regio di Torino, and the Company's *Rigoletto*.



JORDI BERNÀCER
(Alcoi, Spain)
Conductor

Spanish conductor Jordi Bernàcer joined the Company in August 2015. As resident conductor, he

serves as musical assistant to Music Director Nicola Luisotti, in addition to participating in a wide range of musical and rehearsal activities. Bernàcer's conducting credits include last summer's *Carmen* with San Francisco Opera; *La Traviata* at Teatro

Massimo in Palermo; *Rigoletto* at the Teatro Real in Madrid; *Tosca* and *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples; *Manon*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Luisa Fernanda*, and *Simon Boccanegra* (the latter two with Plácido Domingo) at Valencia's Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia; *Tosca* with Los Angeles Opera; *Carmen* in Teatr Wielki in Poland; and operas and concerts at festivals in Italy, Spain, and the Castleton Festival in Virginia. This season, Bernàcer will conduct San Francisco Opera performances of *Madama Butterfly*, the 2016 Adler Fellows Gala Concert *The Future is Now*, and *Rigoletto*, an opera he will also conduct at Naples' Teatro di San Carlo.



LEAH CROCETTO
(Adrian, Michigan)
Aida

Making her role debut as Aida, soprano Leah Crocetto most recently appeared with the Company

in the title role of *Luisa Miller*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, and Liù in *Turandot*. Last season, Crocetto made her New York City recital debut at Pace University with pianist Martin Katz and performed a solo recital under the auspices of Washington National Opera with pianist Mark Markham at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and Merola Opera Program alumna's other engagements in the 2015–16 season included Liù at the Metropolitan Opera, the title role of *Semiramide* with Opera National de Bordeaux, Anna in *Maometto II* with the Canadian Opera Company, and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with Santa Fe Opera. She continues to make noteworthy appearances in 2016–17: her role debut as Eleonora in the U.S. debut of Donizetti's *L'Assedio di Calais* with the Glimmerglass Festival, *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center at Alice Tully Hall, and a solo recital in her hometown of Adrian, Michigan. Recognized as a rising star in the

next generation of singers, Crocetto represented the United States at the 2011 Cardiff BBC Singer of the World Competition where she was a finalist in the Song Competition. She is a 2010 Grand Finals Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and was the First Place Winner, People's Choice, and the Spanish Prize Winner of the 2009 José Iturbi International Music Competition, as well as winner of the Bel Canto Foundation Competition. Crocetto first performed with San Francisco Opera in 2009 as Sister Dolcina in *Suor Angelica*.



BRIAN JAGDE
(New York, New York)

Radames

Performing the role of Radames for the first time, tenor Brian Jagde made his San

Francisco Opera debut in 2010 as Joe in *La Fanciulla del West* and returned as a Messenger in *Aida*, Janek in *The Makropulos Case*, Vitellozzo in *Lucrezia Borgia*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, and Don José in *Carmen*. An alumnus of the 2009 Merola Opera Program and former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow, Jagde recently made house debuts at Houston Grand Opera as the Prince in *Rusalka*, Palm Beach Opera as Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and at Teatro Massimo in Palermo as Pinkerton. Jagde makes other highly anticipated role debuts this season, as Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the Royal Opera House and Froh in *Das Rheingold* in his first appearance with the New York Philharmonic. He will also perform as Pinkerton in a house debut at Washington National Opera, and he sings for the first time at Madrid's Teatro Real as Macduff in *Macbeth* and at Oper Stuttgart as Cavaradossi. In March, he and soprano Ailyn Pérez will perform in concert at the new Anne E. Pitzer Center in Davis, California. Over the course of his career, Jagde has received numerous honors, including top prize at the Loren L. Zachary

Competition in 2014 and second prize in Plácido Domingo's Operalia Competition in 2012.



EKATERINA SEMENCHUK

(St. Petersburg, Russia)

Amneris

Russian mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Semenchuk

made her San

Francisco Opera debut last season as Federica in *Luisa Miller*. Her other recent engagements include Azucena in *Il Trovatore* with Paris Opéra, St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre, and Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Fricka in *Das Rheingold* at the Edinburgh International Festival; and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* at Los Angeles Opera opposite Plácido Domingo. Career highlights include Marina Mnishek in *Boris Godunov* at the Metropolitan Opera; Azucena and Amneris at Milan's Teatro alla Scala; locasta in *Oedipus Rex* and Ascanio in *Benvenuto Cellini* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées; the title role of *Carmen* at Arena di Verona; Preziosilla in *La Forza del Destino* and Amneris with Berlin State Opera; Didon in *Les Troyens* at the Mariinsky Theatre, Carnegie Hall, and in Vienna and Tokyo; Laura Adorno in *La Gioconda* and Dalila in *Samson et Dalila* at Rome Opera; Giovanna Seymour in *Anna Bolena* at the Vienna State Opera; and Eboli in *Don Carlo* and Azucena at Salzburg Festival. On the concert stage, she has appeared as a soloist in Paris, Amsterdam, New York, Vienna, London, and Salzburg. As a recitalist, Semenchuk has performed at Cal Performances at UC Berkeley, London's Wigmore Hall, Vienna's Konzerthaus, Mariinsky Concert Hall, Moscow's Great Concert Hall, and Beijing's Concert Hall. Later this season, she appears as Eboli at Teatro alla Scala and Covent Garden, Azucena at Rome Opera, Dalila in Salerno, and in recital with pianist Helmut Deutsch in London and Vienna.

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GEORGE GAGNIDZE
(Tbilisi, Georgia)
Amonasro

In September, baritone George Gagnidze made his San Francisco Opera debut as

Carlo Gérard in *Andrea Chénier*. Trained at the State Conservatory in his native Georgia, Gagnidze debuted as Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in 1996 at the Paliashvili State Opera. Guest performances followed at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Teatro alla Scala, Vienna State Opera, Teatro Real in Madrid, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Zurich Opera House, Bavarian State Opera, Bolshoi Theatre, Paris' Opéra Bastille, as well as several productions at the Metropolitan Opera, including as Scarpia in *Tosca*. His interpretation of the title role of *Rigoletto* at 2013's Aix-en-Provence Festival, under the direction of Robert Carsen and conducted by Gianandrea Noseda, strengthened his reputation as an outstanding singer-actor. Later this season, Gagnidze returns to the Met to perform Amonasro and to Deutsche Oper Berlin as Scarpia and Carlo Gérard.



RAYMOND ACETO
(Cleveland, Ohio)
Ramfis

Bass Raymond Aceto made his debut with San Francisco Opera in 1997 as Monterone in

Rigoletto and has returned as Banquo in *Macbeth*, the King of Egypt in *Aida*, Hunding in *Die Walküre*, Timur in *Turandot*, and Reverend Olin Blitch in *Susannah*, among other roles. He has also appeared frequently with the Metropolitan Opera, most recently as Zaccaria in *Nabucco*, the King of Egypt, Il Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. Last season saw Aceto return to the Dallas Opera as Scarpia in *Tosca*, followed by his Opera Australia debut as Walter in *Luisa Miller*, Hunding at Washington

National Opera, performances of Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied* with Jaap van Zweden and the Dallas Symphony, and the roles of Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette* and Ashby in *La Fanciulla del West* at Santa Fe Opera. Aceto is also in demand as a concert artist, including recent appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra under the baton of Franz Welser-Möst in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Verdi Requiem, and with the San Francisco Symphony in Mahler's Eighth Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Also this season, he appears as the Bonze in the Company's *Madama Butterfly* and as Méphistophélès in New Orleans Opera's production of *Faust*.



TONI MARIE PALMERTREE
(Fleetwood, Pennsylvania)
A Priestess

Soprano Toni Marie Palmertree is a first-year San Francisco Opera

Adler Fellow and a participant of the 2015 Merola Opera Program where she was featured in the Schwabacher Summer Concert. Earlier this year she appeared with the Company as Barena in *Jenůfa*, a Heavenly Voice in *Don Carlo*, and Lady-in-Waiting/Flower in *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Her operatic repertoire also includes Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Alison in *Wandering Scholar*, the title role of *Susannah*, Musetta and Mimi in *La Bohème*, and Alice in *Falstaff*. Her many awards include The Richard F. Gold Career Grant by the Shoshana Foundation, the Metropolitan Opera National Council District Awards (Pittsburgh), finalist in the National Opera Association Voice Competition, the Classical Singer Voice Competition, and the International Moniuszko Voice Competition in Warsaw, Poland. She took first place in the Long Leaf Opera

of North Carolina Voice Competition, the Kennett Square Symphony Voice Competition, and the Marcella Sembrich Competition.



ANTHONY REED
(Alexandria, Minnesota)
The King of Egypt

Bass Anthony Reed made his San Francisco Opera debut in various roles in 2015's *Les*

Troyens. A second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and an alumnus of the 2014 Merola Opera Program, he also performed with the Company as the Speaker and Second Armored Man in *The Magic Flute*, Hans Schwartz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Doctor Primus in Gordon Getty's *Usher House*, the Mayor of the Village in *Jenůfa*, and Schmidt in *Andrea Chénier*. Other roles in his repertory include Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Truffaldin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, and the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. Reed received a 2011 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Regional Encouragement Award and has been a young artist at the Wolf Trap Opera Studio and the Seagle Music Colony. He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and University of Wisconsin.



PENE PATI
(Auckland, New Zealand)
A Messenger

New Zealander and Samoan-born tenor Pene Pati is a first-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow

and was a participant of the 2013 Merola Opera Program. He made his San Francisco Opera debut as Count Lerma in last summer's *Don Carlo* and most recently appeared at the annual *Opera in the Park* concert and as a Eunuch/Stone in the Company's *Dream of the Red Chamber*. The recipient of an array of prizes in recent

years, including the prestigious Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonygne “Bel Canto” Award in 2012 and the Dame Malvina Major Foundation “New Zealand Aria” Award in 2009, Pati most recently took first place at the Montserrat Caballé International Aria Competition. In 2010, he was named as the Performing Arts Competition Society’s “New Zealand Young Performer of the Year” and other awards include the inaugural Iosefa Enari Memorial scholarship from Creative New Zealand, the Seamus Casey Memorial Award, and a string of accolades from the University of Auckland, including the Pears-Britten and Marie D’Albini awards. He holds a master’s degree in voice from the Wales International Academy of Voice. Pati, along with his brother Amitai Pati and their cousin Moses Mackay, comprise the highly successful New Zealand vocal trio SOL3 MIO, which mixes both classical and contemporary music. Pati will appear with the Company next summer as the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*.



RACHEL SPEIDEL LITTLE

(Sandusky, Michigan)

Solo Dancer

A member of the San Francisco Opera Dance Corps since 2012,

Rachel Speidel Little made her solo debut with the Company as Polyxene in last season’s *Les Troyens*. She also appeared in the Company’s *Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Nixon in China*, *Mefistofele*, and *Attila*. She began her professional career as a member of Milwaukee Ballet II, and has gone on to appear with the Oakland Ballet, Sacramento Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montreal, Ballet de Teatres de la Generalitat Valenciana, Channel Islands Ballet, Amy Seiwert’s Imagery, Menlowe Ballet, and the Milissa Payne Project. Little has also been a regular guest artist with Sierra Nevada Ballet and the San Francisco Symphony.



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JEKYNS PELÁEZ
(Cali, Columbia)
Solo Dancer
Dancer Jekyngs Peláez made his San Francisco Opera debut as the Matador in 2009's *La Traviata*.

He also appeared in the Company's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Turandot*, *Nixon in China*, *Moby-Dick*, *Barber of Seville*, *Show Boat*, and *Sweeney Todd*, among other productions. Peláez has made guest appearances with Ballet Arizona, Ohio Ballet, Chautauqua Ballet, North Carolina Dance Theatre, Histron Theatre of Art, San Jose Ballet, American Conservatory Theatre, Oakland Ballet, Diablo Ballet, and Los Angeles Opera. His principal dance repertoire includes *Apollo*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *Nutcracker*, *Serenade*, *Esplanade*, and *Carmen*. Peláez is also an actor, educator, and filmmaker, and has appeared in the films *Love Hurts* and *Blue Jasmine*.



FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO
(New York, New York)
Director
Recipient of the 2015 San Francisco Opera Medal, Francesca

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 50 productions here, including *Luisa Miller*, *Show Boat*, *Porgy and Bess*, the 2011 Ring cycle *La Traviata*, *La Voix humaine*, *La Bohème*, *Prince Igor*, *Jenůfa*, the West Coast premiere of Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*, and the world premieres of *Heart of a Soldier* and *Two Women*. She is currently general and artistic director of the Glimmerglass Festival and artistic director of Washington National Opera. In addition to her work in opera, she has also staged plays and musicals on Broadway and around the world. Her many honors include France's Chevalier des

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Arts et des Lettres and the Russian Federation's medal for service to culture, three Olivier Awards, two French Grand Prix des Critiques, and Australia's Helpmann Award. Zambello began her career as an assistant director to the late Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. Next season, she returns to San Francisco Opera to direct a revival of the *Ring* cycle.



E. LOREN MEEKER
(Ashland, Massachusetts)
Associate Director
Stage director E. Loren Meeker returns to San Francisco Opera after directing *Die*

Fledermaus in 2006 and associate directing *Show Boat* in 2014. Loren's recent directing engagements include *Carmen* at Washington National Opera, *Die Fledermaus* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Trial by Jury* at Houston Grand Opera, *La Bohème* at San Diego Opera and the Glimmerglass Festival, *Manon Lescaut* at Singapore Lyric Opera, and *Manon* at Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. Other recent work includes the world premiere of *Jason and the Argonauts* for Lyric Opera of Chicago and four world premieres for Houston Grand Opera: *River of Light*, *Past the Checkpoints*, *From My Mother's Mother*, and *A Way Home*. In addition, she has directed new productions for New Orleans Opera (*Die Fledermaus*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*), Finger Lakes Opera (*L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Carmen*), Amarillo Opera (*Candide*), and the Boston University Opera Institute (*Cendrillon*, *Vinkensport*). Upcoming engagements include *Candide* at Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse and Opéra National de Bordeaux, *Faust* at New Orleans Opera, and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Opera San Antonio.



RETNA
(Los Angeles, California)
Artistic Designer
RETNA (Marquis Duriel Lewis) was born in 1979 in Los Angeles. At the age of fifteen, he began painting on posted fashion advertisements and, from there, led one of the largest and most innovative art collectives in the city. His work has been exhibited at institutions and galleries in Los Angeles (including the façade of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art's Grand Avenue location for their 2013 Gala celebrating the exhibition *Art In The Streets*), Miami, London, New York (including the prestigious public exhibition space of the Houston-Bowery Wall), and Hong Kong. RETNA has created exclusive collaborations with brands such as VistaJet, Nike, Louis Vuitton, and Chanel. He lives and works in Los Angeles.



MICHAEL YEARGAN
(Dallas, Texas)
Set Designer
Since his San Francisco Opera debut in 1993 with *I Puritani*, Michael Yeargan

has designed sets and costumes for the Company's productions of *The Merry Widow*, *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Rigoletto*, *Luisa Miller*, the *Ring* cycle, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Susannah*, and the world premieres of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Dead Man Walking*. Yeargan's North American opera credits include designs for the Metropolitan Opera (*Otello*, *Così fan tutte*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and the world premiere of Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*); Los Angeles Opera (*Nabucco*, *The Merry Widow*, *Stiffelio*, *Hansel and Gretel*); Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Antony and Cleopatra*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Nabucco*, *The Pirates of Penzance*); the Dallas Opera (*Madama*

Butterfly, *Rigoletto*, *Hansel and Gretel*); Houston Grand Opera (*Floyd's Cold Sassy Tree* and *Susannah*); and the Glimmerglass Festival (*Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Central Park*), among others. Internationally, he has designed productions for Welsh National Opera; the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Scottish Opera; Théâtre Musical de Paris; Frankfurt Opera; and Opera Australia. A two-time Tony Award winner for *South Pacific* and *The Light in the Piazza*, Yeargan has also designed New York productions of Terrence McNally's *Bad Habits*, *The Ritz*, *Awake and Sing*, and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. He has worked extensively with regional theaters throughout America and is a professor of stage design at the Yale School of Drama.



ANITA YAVICH
(New York, New York)
Costume Designer
Anita Yavich has designed costumes for theaters, opera houses, and dance companies across

the U.S. and internationally. Making her San Francisco Opera debut in 2001 with *Arshak II*, she also designed costumes for *Cyrano de Bergerac* at Teatro alla Scala, Metropolitan Opera, and Royal Opera, Covent Garden; *Les Troyens* at Metropolitan Opera; *The Rape of Lucretia* at Houston Grand Opera; Golijov's *Ainadamar* at Tanglewood; *Salome*, *Fidelio*, *Die Walküre*, and *Das Rheingold* at Washington National Opera; and *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Spoleto Festival. For Broadway she designed costumes for *Fool for Love*, *Venus in Fur*, *Chinglish*, and *Anna in the Tropics*, and she has been the puppet and costume designer for *The Sound of Music* at the Salzburg Marionette Theater and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* at Minneapolis Children's Theater. A recipient of the 2006 Lucille Lortel Award, 2006 Obie Award, and 2016 Drama Desk Award, Yavich is an associate professor of theater design at SUNY Purchase

and a lecturer in theater at Princeton University.



MARK McCULLOUGH
(Charlottesville, Virginia)
Lighting Designer
Lighting Designer Mark McCullough made his San Francisco Opera

debut in 2000 with *Luisa Miller* and has returned for numerous productions, including *Arshak II*, *The Mother of Us All*, *Rigoletto*, *Porgy and Bess*, the 2011 *Ring* cycle, and the world premieres of *Heart of a Soldier* and *Two Women*. He has designed lighting for the Metropolitan Opera (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Bolshoi Theatre (*La Traviata*), Royal Opera, Covent Garden (*The Queen of Spades*), Teatro alla Scala (*Cyrano de Bergerac*), Vienna State Opera (*Macbeth*), and the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*). Future engagements include *Der Freischütz* at Vienna State Opera, *Porgy and Bess* and *Siege of Calais* at the Glimmerglass Festival, and *Candide* at Théâtre du Capitole, Toulouse and Opéra National de Bordeaux.



JESSICA LANG
(Doylestown, Pennsylvania)
Choreographer
Making her San Francisco Opera debut, Jessica Lang is a New York City-based

choreographer and artistic director of her own company, Jessica Lang Dance. A recipient of a 2014 Bessie Award, Lang has created more than 95 works since 1999, including for American Ballet Theatre, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, the National Ballet of Japan, and Joffrey Ballet, among many others. Additional commissions include new works for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts with the National Symphony Orchestra, the Harris

Theater and the Chicago Architecture Biennial in collaboration with architect Steven Holl, the Dallas Museum of Art, and the Guggenheim Museum for its Works and Process series. In opera, Lang made her directorial debut creating and choreographing Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* at the 2013 Glimmerglass Festival. She was a 2015 New York City Center Fellow and is a current fellow at the Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University. Jessica Lang Dance will tour to 29 cities in the current 2016–17 season, including performances at the Los Angeles Music Center, Seattle's Meany Center for the Performing Arts, and the Tel Aviv Opera House.



CLIFTON BROWN
(Goodyear, Arizona)
Associate Choreographer
Making his San Francisco Opera debut, Clifton

Brown is currently the rehearsal director for Jessica Lang Dance, as well as a founding member of that company. He began his professional career when he joined the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1999. While there, he was featured in many works, named assistant rehearsal director, and served as Judith Jamison's choreographic assistant. Brown has been nominated in the U.K. for a Critics' Circle National Dance Award for Best Male Dancer, received a Bessie Award in recognition of his work with the Ailey company, as well as a Black Theater Arts Award. He has had the privilege of performing at the White House and for President Obama. Brown has also danced with Earl Mosley's Diversity of Dance, Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, and as a guest artist with Miami City Ballet, Rome Opera Ballet, Nevada Ballet, and Parsons Dance Company. He has made several television appearances, including as a guest artist on *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Dancing With the Stars*. As a répétiteur, he has set the work of

Alvin Ailey, Earl Mosley, and Jessica Lang. He continues to assist Lang around the world, including at the Glimmerglass Festival, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre.



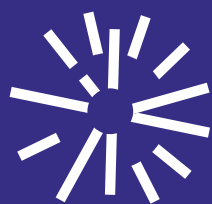
IAN ROBERTSON
(Dundee, Scotland)
Chorus Director
Recipient of the 2012 San Francisco Opera Medal, Ian Robertson has been chorus director and conductor with San

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



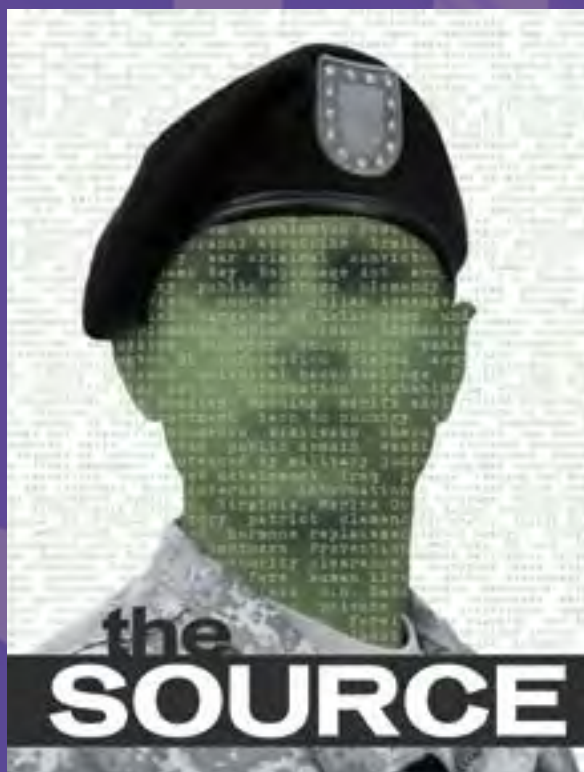
LAWRENCE PECH
(San Francisco, California)
Dance Master
Lawrence Pech is in his twentieth season as dance master and resident choreographer for

San Francisco Opera. He has created period and interpretive dances on more than sixty productions with the Company. Pech received his formal training from American Ballet Theatre (ABT) and was invited by Mikhail Baryshnikov to join that company in 1980. In 1986, he joined San Francisco Ballet, where he became a principal dancer in 1989. Pech founded two of his own dance companies and has



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DAVE MAIER
(Great Neck, New York)

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director for San
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Dave Maier

made his Company debut in 2013 with *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. His work has most recently appeared in the Company's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Luisa Miller*, *The Magic Flute*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Carmen*, *Don Carlo*, and *Jenůfa*. Maier has directed fight scenes for American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theater, San Jose Repertory, Aurora Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, and Magic Theatre, among others. He is a five-time recipient of the San Francisco Bay Area Drama Critics Circle Award for Fight Direction, as well as an adjunct faculty member at the University of California Santa Cruz and St. Mary's College of California. He currently teaches combat-related courses in Berkeley. This San Francisco Opera season, his work appears in *Andrea Chénier*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Aida*, and *Madama Butterfly*.

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 Mr. Edwin Lennox
 Ms. Linda Lester McIlvoy
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 Ms. Louise Peele
 Ms. Pamela Philbert
 Mr. Ralph A. Philbrook
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* deceased



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Together we'll go far





Kay Stern
Concertmaster



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 Kadarau
Principal
Cello



Thalia Moore
Associate Principal
Cello



Nora Pirquet
Acting Assistant
Principal, Cello



Emil Miland
Cello



Victoria Ehrlich
Cello



Ruth Lane
Cello



Eric Sung
Cello
Regular Substitute



Joseph Lescher
Principal
Bass

SAN FRANCISCO ORCHESTRA CONTINUED



Jonathan Lancelle
Associate Principal
Bass



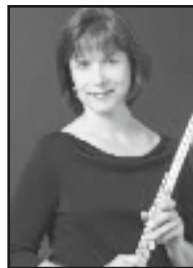
Steven D'Amico
Assistant Principal
Bass



Shinji Eshima
Bass



Mark Drury
Bass



Julie McKenzie
Principal
Flute



Patricia Farrell
Flute



Stephanie McNab
Flute & Piccolo



Mingjia Liu
Principal
Oboe



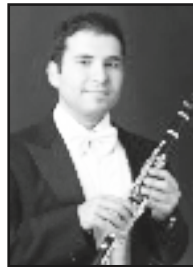
Deborah Henry
Assistant Principal
Oboe



Janet Popesco
Archibald
Oboe & English Horn



Deborah Shidler
Oboe
Regular Substitute



Jose Gonzalez
Granero
Principal Clarinet



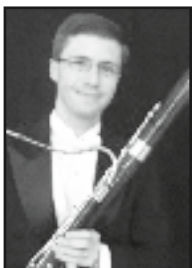
Joanne Burke Eisler
Assistant Principal
Clarinet



Anthony Striplen
Clarinet &
Bass Clarinet



Rufus Olivier
Principal
Bassoon



Daniel MacNeill
Bassoon



Michael Severance
Bassoon &
Contrabassoon



Kevin Rivard
Co-Principal
Horn



Mark Almond
Co-Principal
Horn



Keith Green
Horn



Brian McCarty
Horn



Lawrence Ragent
Horn



Adam Luftman
Principal
Trumpet



William Holmes
Trumpet



John Pearson
Trumpet



Scott Macomber
Trumpet
Regular Substitute



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

Most photos by John Martin. Not pictured: Lev Rankov, First Violin



Tracy Davis
Orchestra Manager

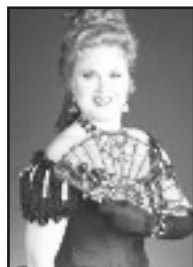


Carrie Weick
Librarian

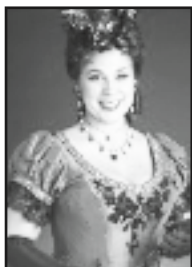


Timothy Spears
*Assistant Orchestra
Manager & Librarian*

REGULAR CHORUS



Kathleen Bayler
Soprano



Sara Colburn
Soprano



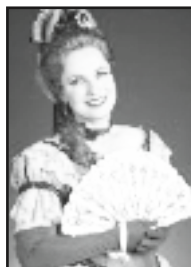
Dvora Djoraev
Soprano



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



Buffy Baggott
Mezzo-Soprano



Roberta Bowman
Mezzo-Soprano



Janet Campbell
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Mouzon
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Munro
Mezzo-Soprano



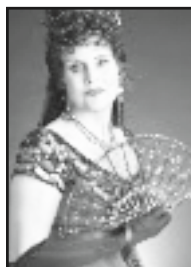
Erin Neff
Mezzo-Soprano



Laurel Porter
Mezzo-Soprano



Laurel Rice
Mezzo-Soprano



Shelley Seitz
Mezzo-Soprano



Claudia Siefer
Mezzo-Soprano



Donna Turchi
Mezzo-Soprano



C. Michael Belle
Tenor



Alan Cochran
Tenor



Chris Corley
Tenor



Daniel Harper
Tenor



Christopher Jackson
Tenor



Phillip Pickens
Tenor

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA REGULAR CHORUS CONTINUED



Chester Pidduck
Tenor



Colby Roberts
Tenor



Sigmund Seigel
Tenor



Dan Stanley
Tenor



Alexander Taite
Tenor



Andrew Truett
Tenor



Richard Walker
Tenor



Torlef Borsting
Baritone



Anders Fröhlich
Baritone



Cameron Henley
Baritone



Ken Johnson
Baritone



David Kekuewa
Baritone



Frederick Matthews
Baritone



Ken Rafanan
Baritone
Leave of Absence



Michael Rogers
Baritone



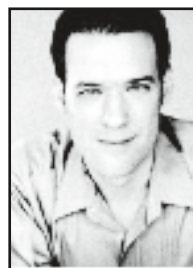
Jere Torkelsen
Baritone



Bojan Knežević
Bass



Jim Meyer
Bass



William O'Neill
Bass



William Pickersgill
Bass

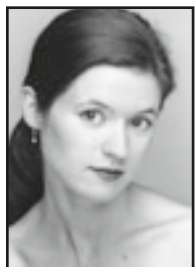


Valery Portnov
Bass

Most photos by John Martin. Carole Schaffer and Claudia Siefer photos by Pamela Dale.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

CORPS DANCERS



Brook Broughton



Blanche Hampton



Bryan Ketron



Michael Levine



Rachel Speidel Little



Chiharu Shibata

ARTISTS

Raymond Aceto
 Julie Adams † † †
 Julius Ahn
 Alex Boyer †
 J'Nai Bridges*
 Lawrence Brownlee*
 Arturo Chacón-Cruz
 Scott Conner
 Catherine Cook † † †
 Leah Crocetto † † †
 Vincenzo Costanzo**
 Ildebrando D'Arcangelo*
 Stanislas de Barbeyrac*
 Ellie Dehn
 Amina Edris † † †
 Anthony Clark Evans*
 Anders Fröhlich
 George Gagnidze*
 Erika Grimaldi
 Jill Grove †
 Yanyu Guo † † †
 Lianna Haroutounian
 Karen Chia-ling Ho*
 Audun Iversen
 Brian Jagde † † †
 Pureum Jo*
 Quinn Kelsey † † †
 Hyona Kim*
 Bojan Knežević
 Yonghoon Lee*
 Nino Machaidze*
 Ana María Martínez
 Lucas Meachem † † †
 Nadja Michael
 Maurizio Muraro
 Randall Nakano*
 Edward Nelson † † †
 Matthew O'Neill † † †
 Toni Marie Palmertree † † †
 Pene Pati † † †
 David Pershall* † † †
 Anna Pirozzi**
 Robert Pomakov
 Stephen Powell
 Anthony Reed † † †
 Irene Roberts
 Brenton Ryan*
 Ekaterina Semenchuk
 Sarah Shafer
 Yijie Shi*
 Andrea Silvestrelli
 Joel Sorensen
 Heidi Stober

Matthew Stump † † †
 Michael Sumuel † † †
 Zanda Švėde † † †
 Jere Torkelsen
 Dale Travis † † †
 Marco Vinco
 Brad Walker † † †
 Erin Wall*
 Charles Workman*
 Qiulin Zhang**

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Yves Abel
 Jordi Bernàcer
 Giuseppe Finzi
 Nicola Luisotti
 George Manahan
 Marc Minkowski*
 Carlo Montanaro
 Mikhail Tatarnikov*

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John Caird
 Dan Dooner
 Rob Kearley*
 Stan Lai*
 David McVicar
 E. Loren Meeker
 Laurent Pelly
 Jacopo Spirei*
 Leslie Swackhamer
 Olivier Tambosi
 Francesca Zambello

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RETNA*

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 Jun Kaneko
 Frank Philipp Schlössmann
 Tim Yip*

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Alessandro Camera
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 Chantal Thomas
 Michael Yeargan

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 Jenny Tiramani*
 Andrea Viotti
 Anita Yavich

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 Duane Schuler
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Tommi Brem*

CHOREOGRAPHERS

Andrew George
 Clifton Brown*
 Jessica Lang*
 Melissa Noble
 Lawrence Pech
 Colm Seery
 Fang-Yi Sheu*

FIGHT DIRECTOR

Dave Maier

* San Francisco Opera debut

** U.S. 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

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

† Chorus member on Leave of Absence

* Chorus member appearing in a Solo Role

EXTRA CHORUS

Elizabeth Baker	Richard Block
Jennifer Brody	David Endacott-Hicks
Angela Cadelago	Micah Epps
Katie Carlson	Adam Flowers
Kristin Clayton	Peter Girardôt
Karen Winner Huff	Patrick Hagen
Silvie Jensen	Thomas Hart
Carolyne Anne Jordan	Michael Jankosky
Eileen Meredith	Bradley Kynard
Jessie Neilson	Matthew Lovell
Aimée Puentes	Michael Mendelsohn
Mimi Ruiz	Jim Monios
Nicole Takesono	Jess G. Perry
Jacque Wilson	Keith Perry
Kali Wilson	Samuel Rabinowitz
	Pedro Rodelas
	Karl Saarni
	Jason Sarten
	Michael Taylor
	Nicholas Volkert

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Lawrence Pech, *Dance Master*

Laura Alexich*
 Brook Broughton†
 Alice Cao
 Alysia Chang
 Aiden DeYoung
 Melissa del Sol
 Stephen Di Biase
 Jamielyn Duggan*
 Blanche Hampton†
 Bryan Ketron*†
 Luke Lazzaro
 Michael Levine*†
 Rachel Speidel Little*†
 Angela Dice Nguyen
 Brian Patterson
 Jekyns Peláez*
 Chiharu Shibata*†
 Alexander Vargas
 Marcos Vedoveto

* Solo Dancer
 † Tenured

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 Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair
 Jordi Bernàcer, *Resident Conductor*

FIRST VIOLIN

Kay Stern, *Concertmaster*
 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*
 Mark Almond, *Co-Principal*
 Keith Green
 Brian McCarty
 Lawrence Ragent

TRUMPET

Adam Luftman, *Principal*
 William Holmes †
 Scott Macomber **
 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 Ortenberg-Rakitchenkov

LIBRARIAN

Carrie Weick
 Timothy Spears, *Assistant*

ORCHESTRA MANAGER

Tracy Davis
 Timothy Spears, *Assistant*

* Principal for one or more Fall season operas

† Leave of absence

** Season substitute

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Ms. Susan Pirri	Ms. Janet L. Rodriguez	Drs. Charles & Andrea Shapiro	Mr. Tom Standing
Mr. Scott Plakun & Dr. Milton P. Schaefer	Ms. Marguerite Romanello	Dr. & Mrs. James Shapiro	Joelle Steefel
Genevieve Plusa	Ms. Sybil F. Roos	Don & Lorraine Sharman	Mr. & Mrs. Reginald D. Steer
Buford & Jo Ann Price	Mr. Sean Rositano	Ms. Carolyn Shaw	Harvey Steiman
Dr. David Priest & Rev. Eric M. Nefstead	Mary Ellen Rossi	Mr. & Mrs. Allen Shepard	Mr. Matthew Stepka
Janet & Michael Quartaroli	Mr. George E. Rossmann	Mr. Leslie M. Shinozawa	Mr. Martin Stidham
Davis Ralston	Mr. David Rothman	Mr. Richard H. Shoop	Ian E. Stockdale & Ruth Leibig
Mr. Robert W. Rankin	Mr. Richard E. Rowland	Dr. Marilyn N. Silva	Mr. John Stocker
Ms. Ann Ratcliffe	Jeffrey Ruda & Leonard Whitney	Mrs. Harriet Simpson	Ms. Wendy Storch
Charles & Patricia Raven	Jordan Sachs & Jeannie Sack	Ms. Michaelene C. Skronski	Mr. Edward Storm
Rossannah Reeves	Mr. Bert Salyga & Dr. Sean McCarthy	Mrs. Robert K. Slack	Ms. Blanche G. Streeter
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Frances K. Reid	Roy L. Sauer	Mr. Albert G. Smith	Mr. Marc Sugiyama
Mr. Elmer J. Reist	Mr. George Scalise	Dennis & Kagari Smith	Mrs. Ann Y. Sullivan
Ms. Judy Reynolds	Ms. Beth Scanlan	Mary Anne Smith	Ms. Lauren Sullivan
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Ms. Maud Thiebaud
Dr. Ruedi F. Thoeni, M.D.
Mr. Ralph Tiegel
Lynne Toribara & Brian Howard
Gunnel Tottie
Jeanie Nieri Treichel
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Denny & Kate Van Ness
Mr. Guy Vandenberg &
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Ms. Claire Waters
Don Watson
Rhonda & Andrew Weber
Mr. Keith R. Weed

Matthew & Barbara Weinberg
David & Kay Werdegar
Ms. Mariquita West
Karen Wetherell
Mr. Dennis White
Dr. Thomas White
Diana & Nelson Wild
Elizabeth S. Wilder
Mr. Doug Williams &
Ms. Madelyn Bedig-Williams
Robert J. & Carole Williams
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Ward & Polly Wolff
In memory of Stanley Won

Dr. Carlene J. Wong &
Dr. Philip C. Lee
Ms. Virginia Wong
Ms. Janet S. Wright
Phil Wright
Diana Williams & Robert Wright
Dr. Stanley M. Yantis
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Mrs. Jane Zahra
Mr. William T. Zaumen
Dr. Sondra Zentner &
Ms. Sophie Neubert
Sanford & Leah Ziegler
Anonymous (2)

* deceased

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The **OPERA BOX OFFICE** is located in the Opera House, 301 Van Ness Avenue, and is open Monday 10 AM–5 PM, Tuesday through Saturday 10 AM–6 PM, and through the first intermission on performance days. Tickets may also be charged by phone at (415) 864-3330 or ordered online at sfopera.com. We accept American Express, VISA, MasterCard, and Discover.

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.

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

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

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

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Performance Etiquette

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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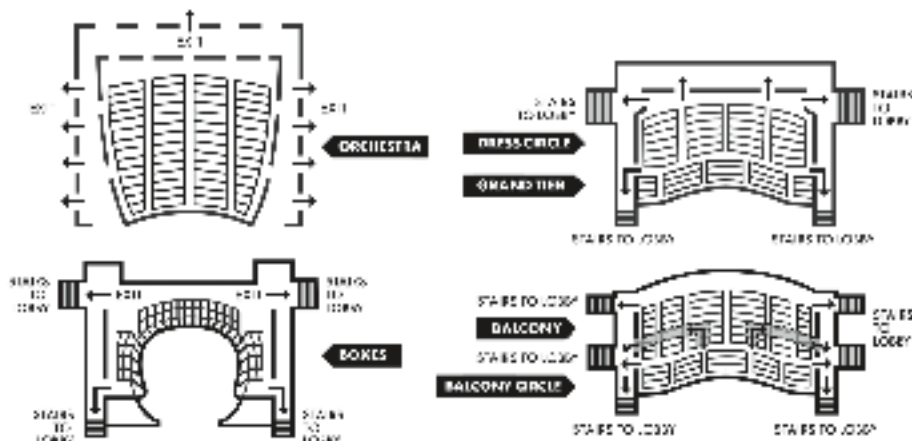
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