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Andrea Chénier

UMBERTO GIORDANO



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 Ferdinand Victor Eugène Delacroix
 (1798–1863)
La Liberté guidant le peuple (c. 1830–31)
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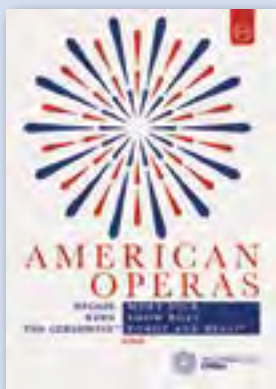
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A MESSAGE FROM

THE BOARD OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Welcome to San Francisco Opera's 94th repertory season!

This is the inaugural season of General Director Matthew Shillock, only the seventh general director in the Company's history. There is no one better qualified than Matthew to build on David Gockley's remarkable tenure. Matthew's dynamic leadership will ensure that San Francisco Opera continues to present world-class grand opera and find new ways to expand the Company's role in our community.

Our exciting opening weekend starts with Umberto Giordano's epic *Andrea Chénier*—last seen at the War Memorial Opera House in 1992—followed by the world premiere of Bright Sheng and David Henry Hwang's *Dream of the Red Chamber*, based on the classic Chinese novel. San Francisco Opera has long recognized the importance of commissioning new works to keep our art form vibrant. We are deeply grateful to all those who made this lush and lyrical 21st-century opera possible, including a brilliant international cast and creative team, General Director Emeritus David Gockley, and the committee leadership of San Francisco Opera Board member Doreen Woo Ho, War Memorial Trustee Gorretti Lo Lui, and Asian Art Museum Board President and Opera Board member Timothy Kahn.

Our opening weekend also includes the Opera Guild's glamorous Opera Ball, the BRAVO! Club's Gala, and our free *Opera in the Park* concert in Golden Gate Park. We are especially grateful to Dede Wilsey for sponsoring this opening weekend.

Producing opera, the most complex of performing art forms, is very much a team effort. Our dedicated orchestra, chorus, dancers, crew, and administration are the foundation of this great company. Their efforts are supported by a remarkably generous group of nearly 8,000 donor households. This partnership has a major impact on our community and the opera world, both nationally and internationally.

In addition to our annual War Memorial Opera House audience of nearly 200,000, tens of thousands experience our work at *Opera in the Park* and *Opera at the Ballpark*. Millions more access us through our media partnerships with KDFC and WFMT radio and KQED television. Our opera education programs benefit thousands of Bay Area public school children, and our Adler Fellowships provide world-class training for young singers.

Finally, thanks to all our patrons and donors. Your passion and commitment sustain San Francisco Opera, and we are excited and honored to share this new season with you.



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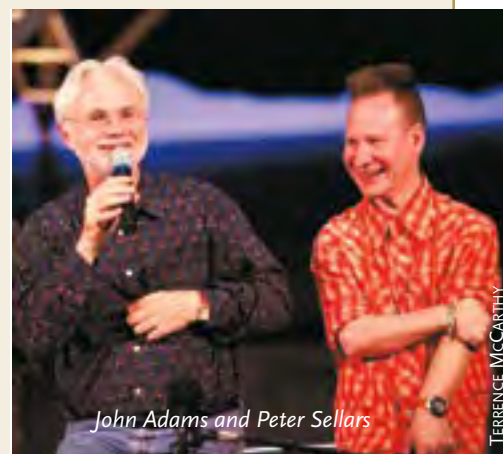
SIMON PAULY

Matthew Shilcock Begins Tenure as General Director

For only the seventh time in its 94-year history, San Francisco Opera has a new general director. This season, Matthew Shilcock joins the short list of visionaries who have guided the Company from its infancy to its status as one of the world's leading opera producers. At 39, Shilcock is the youngest general director in the Company's history.

Shilcock has unique institutional knowledge and experience, having joined the Company in 2005 and having served as associate general director since 2010. "This is a company that I know and love deeply. I know how talented the people are, how important the work is, and how passionate the audience is. But I still feel something very new in the responsibility and opportunity of this position. To be in the general director's office, working with a team I trust implicitly, is incredible and humbling. I feel a strong sense of excitement for where we are going as a company."

Shilcock and his team are exploring programming for the future and are committed to presenting the very best the art form has to offer. "Between refreshing our core repertoire and finding impactful productions of lesser-known operas, I am looking to develop productions that tell powerful stories in compelling ways: those artists, directors and designers who can synthesize the musical arc of a piece with vibrant productions, enhancing the storytelling inherent in the music through the dramaturgy of the stage."



John Adams and Peter Sellars

TERRENCE MCCARTHY

JOHN ADAMS WORLD PREMIERE SET FOR 2017

The Company has announced plans for a highly anticipated new opera by *Nixon in China* composer John Adams and librettist/director Peter Sellars. Set during the 1850s California Gold Rush, *Girls of the Golden West*—scheduled to premiere in November 2017—draws from historical sources and interweaves stories of three women who lived in a small mining community in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

"In its recent history San Francisco Opera has proudly presented John's major operas, beginning with our co-commission and West Coast premiere of *The Death of Klinghoffer* in 1992, followed by our commission and world premiere of *Doctor Atomic* in 2005, and most recently in 2012 with *Nixon in China*," said General Director Emeritus David Gockley. "The subject of *Girls of the Golden West*, with its colorful stories dramatizing the free-for-all spirit of this pivotal time in California history, is perfectly suited to John and his home base here in California."

Joining San Francisco Opera as co-commissioners and co-producers of *Girls of the Golden West* are The Dallas Opera, Amsterdam's Dutch National Opera (De Nationale Opera), and Venice's Teatro La Fenice. Casting for the new work and other details regarding the 2017–18 Season will be announced in January.



ED ANDERSON

Notes from the General Director

Envisioning the Next Chapter

I was recently asked in an interview what my favorite moments in the theater are and, after a little reflection, I realized that they are those magical moments of calm readiness, just before the maestro enters the pit and we begin our journey into an extraordinary world of emotions, drama, and glorious music. In those preparatory moments backstage there is an electric feeling of anticipation: artists are getting into their opening places, the orchestra is tuning, crew members are doing final checks to ensure everything will run with exquisite precision, the audience is taking their seats, and the house manager and stage manager are coordinating the point at which we are ready to begin the launch sequence. These moments are the culmination of years of planning, rehearsing, building, fundraising, marketing: every disparate and diverse aspect of a major international opera company coming together in one perfectly coordinated downbeat. In these moments the whole ecosystem of San Francisco Opera is poised and ready to jump enthusiastically together into an exciting performance.

I have been privileged to spend most of my professional career at San Francisco Opera and I have been blessed to get to know many of the people who bring these dramatic works to life: more than 900 artists, artisans, craftspeople, technicians, and administrators. And you, the audience without whose devotion and generosity none of this would be possible. Every one of us is critical to the production of opera and the huge benefit of this internal transition is that I know so many of the people already involved. I know the dedication, the talents, the hours that go into producing opera here. I know the huge pride that people have for the role they play. I know the wonderful complexities of this great family that is San Francisco Opera.

I wanted to give you a brief sense of my four key hopes for the company — your company — in the coming years as we approach our centennial in 2022:


- First is empowering, nurturing, and supporting the people of San Francisco Opera: that great collective who give so much and to whom I am dedicated to providing the most supportive, creative, and engaging atmosphere in which to produce art.

- Second is furthering this company's incredible role as a creative leader in the opera world. I want to ensure we are producing vanguard cultural expressions both on the main stage and in the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera that advance the art form but always with respect for the musical beauty and powerful storytelling so inherent in the great operas of our canon.
- Third stems from my fervent belief that opera is as resonant now as it ever has been and that we must find vanguard ways to inspire new and returning audiences. We must focus on the unique emotional impact of opera and create public trust that *any* night in the War Memorial Opera House is worthy of your time and resources. The whole experience must be compelling, from parking to lobbies to stage.
- Fourth is the unshakable imperative that we find a stable fiscal model that can allow us to bring you creative, legendary performances of the kind you expect and deserve. Arts economics are never easy, but you have a staff and board committed to a thrilling artistic vision supported by strong fiscal stability.

I look forward to sharing more thoughts with you in coming program books, but hope that this gives you at least a taste of my vision. Fundamental in all of this is my profound optimism about our future. We offer performances of such powerful emotional intensity, such sublime music making, and such theatrical magic. Opera must be at the forefront of the tidal wave of change that is sweeping this city. I am excited to ride that wave and celebrate what is possible when a community of passionate people takes that collective breath before the curtain, and prepares for another moment of transformational opera.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be the custodian of your extraordinary organization. I could not be more honored to be on this journey with you. 🌟

—MATTHEW SHILVOCK

 @MATTHEWSHILVOCK



SCOTT WALL

A corridor view of the new David Gockley Gallery at the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera.

A Photographic History of San Francisco Opera

Learn more about the Company's distinguished history with a new permanent exhibition at the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera. *Looking through the Lens: The Glory of San Francisco Opera, Past and Present* draws from the rich collection of the newly established Paul M. Braby San Francisco Opera Archives and shows 135 photographs—including many images never before seen or published—of the world's leading artists with members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, Chorus, and Dance Corps.

Starting with the David Gockley Gallery, the black-and-white photo display includes pictures from the Company's early days and of the American opera debuts of Leontyne Price, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, and Kirsten Flagstad. The Hume Family Gallery continues through the present with colorful images of Plácido Domingo in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Renée Fleming in *Rusalka*, Nina Stemme in *Siegfried*, and Nadja Michael in *Salome*, among many others.

The galleries are open to the public during normal business hours on the fourth floor of the Veterans Building, the home of the new Wilsey Center which opened in February. To learn more, please visit sfopera.com/archives.

In Celebration of "Pitch" Johnson

San Francisco Opera Guild is proud to announce *An Evening on the Stage*, a special gala event to be held on Monday, December 5 to honor business leader and philanthropist **Franklin P. (Pitch) Johnson, Jr.** Johnson was Chairman of the Board of San Francisco Opera from 1999 through 2008 and for 12 years taught a class in entrepreneurship and venture capital at Stanford Business School. The celebratory evening will commence with festive cocktails at 6 p.m. in the lobby of the War Memorial Opera House, followed by a sumptuous dinner, presentation, and dancing. Individual tickets are priced at \$750, \$1,250, \$2,500, \$5,000, and \$7,500 with tables priced at \$7,500, \$12,500, and \$25,000. Seating is limited. For more information, call (415) 565-3204.



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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA *Profile*

Daniel Knapp

Managing Director: Production



ED ANDERSON

Located on the northern shoreline of Lake Constance, just near the borders of Switzerland and Austria, Friedrichshafen, Germany is perhaps best known as the birthplace of the Zeppelin dirigible airship. It's also where San Francisco Opera Managing Director of Production Daniel Knapp grew up. A tuba player in his youth, equally comfortable in symphonic music, beer-hall oom-pah, and rock, Knapp nurtured another talent in his teens: helping coordinate live events and theatrical productions. This organizational knack—as well as his empathy for artists and the creative process—ultimately catapulted Knapp to the world's great opera houses.

“There came a point when I knew that I couldn't be a professional musician but wanted to contribute to what was happening onstage,” said Knapp. “There's no greater focus and energy than when the house lights dim and you're part of a terrific production that sweeps you along like a giant wave. I have been lucky to share in many experiences like that.”

Since beginning at San Francisco Opera in 2015, Knapp has been in charge of the Company's stage carpentry, electrics, props and sound crew, technical direction, staging staff, costume, wardrobe, wig and makeup departments, scene shop, and bringing creative concepts to life on our stage. Many years earlier the opera bug bit him while doing national volunteer service in Munich. Further experiences came along working on elaborate productions by Sting, David Copperfield, Peter Gabriel, as well as production manager for the Ukrainian State Opera where his many duties included handling

prickly customs officials in Eastern European capitals.

Soon afterward, Knapp received an auspicious phone call that took him to the world-acclaimed Bregenz Festival in Austria. He swiftly moved up the ranks there to serve as its artistic production director and head of company management. “I basically worked as a liaison between creative teams, technical depart-

ments, stage crew, and administration, being able to communicate to these different segments what was needed to bring the creative vision to the stage.” As house producer for both the Opera on the Lake Floating Stage and Bregenz Festival House, Knapp oversaw the recent *Die Zauberflöte*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Aida*, *King Roger*, *The Passenger*, and four world premiere-commissioned works. He also served as Austrian location manager for what was originally billed as an English documentary—later revealed as the 2008 James Bond film *Quantum of Solace*, which famously depicted *Tosca* on Bregenz's Floating Stage.

Knapp's wife Alexandra and three sons still reside in Germany, which has meant a great deal of travel for him and his family. Through computer and iPhone, he stays in constant touch, helping one of his sons with a DJ gig, for instance, and even going online for the eating of meals. “The world has changed a lot since my childhood,” says Knapp. “There is a constant need for us to adapt to new realities and technologies.”

The same, he says, holds true for the Company. “I am always open to new challenges,” says Knapp. “And for me there is nothing more exciting than helping continue the exceptional history of San Francisco Opera.”

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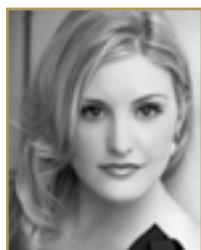
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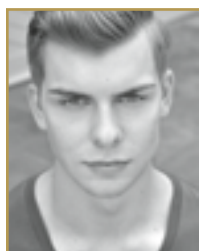
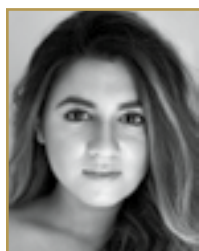
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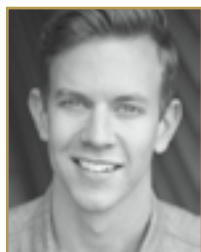


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Dreamweavers

*An all-star
creative team
transports
an epic
Chinese novel
to the
operatic stage*

*I*t's not the first time that San Francisco Opera has looked toward China. There was the 2008 premiere of Stewart Wallace's *The Bonesetter's Daughter* with a libretto by Bay Area native Amy Tan. And of course, there's John Adams' *Nixon in China*. Neither of those, though, could properly be called a Chinese classic.

By contrast, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, which has its world premiere on September 10, is not just a classic. To millions of Chinese readers, it's the classic. Cao Xueqin's epic novel of ill-fated love amidst a prominent family's spiraling decline has inspired numerous films and spoken dramas, two television series, and far too many Chinese operas to count. But never before has the story made it—in English, no less—to the international operatic stage.

The creators of *Red Chamber*—the “Dream team,” if you will—are notable not just for their personal accomplishments but also the breadth of their background. The range of perspectives from MacArthur-winning Shanghai-born composer Bright Sheng, Tony-winning American-born playwright David Henry Hwang, American-born Taiwanese director Stan Lai, and Oscar-winning Hong Kong-born designer Tim Yip are perfectly pitched to haul San Francisco audiences

(Opposite page, from left to right) The “Dream team” of composer and co-librettist Bright Sheng, director Stan Lai, co-librettist David Henry Hwang, and (right) production designer Tim Yip.

into another culture and era. In this interview with Hong Kong-based Financial Times critic Ken Smith, the composer, librettist, and director discussed the daunting task of tackling one of China’s most beloved novels as a 21st-century musical drama.

***Dream of the Red Chamber* is almost universally known in the Chinese world but barely registers at all with readers in the West. What was your personal relationship with the story before this project began?**

BRIGHT SHENG: I first started reading *Dream of the Red Chamber* when I was 12 or 13, about the same age as Bao Yu in the novel. This was during the Cultural Revolution, and I wished that I too could be surrounded by beautiful women and have his extravagant lifestyle. Later on, in my late teens, I read the book again and began to appreciate the literary content. I still didn’t pay much attention to the scholarly details until later. I’ve reread the book every ten years or so, and since I got the commission to write the opera, I read it through twice more. So now I’m a dilettante Redol-



in *Red Chamber* comes from the way the author opens with the stone and the flower, which becomes a metaphor encapsulating elements of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism—the three incredibly vast philosophical systems that work together in making up the Chinese mind.

How did each of you get involved in the project?

SHENG: Pearl Bergad at the Chinese Heritage Foundation in Minnesota had this crazy idea to do an opera of *Red Chamber* in English. The foundation first approached Kevin Smith, then President and CEO of the Minnesota Opera, who arranged a meeting with David Gockley, then still General Director of San Francisco Opera, who approached me. And then I approached David Hwang, whom I’d worked

with on other projects. He didn’t want to do it at first, but I persuaded him.

HWANG: I said absolutely no, I’m not going to adapt this story into an opera, because it just seemed impossible. The book is twice as long as *War and Peace*, with more than 400 characters. How can you shape that into a two-and-a-half-hour show that has any relationship to the source material or respects it in any measurable way? But Bright grew up in China during the Cultural Rev-

“There’s a constant tension just below the surface, which later became a metaphor for the decline of imperial China—sort of like *Downton Abbey* of the Qing Dynasty.” —*Dream of the Red Chamber* co-librettist David Henry Hwang

ogist, which is what they call academics who devote themselves to studying the novel. At least I could have a meaningful conversation with a *real* Redologist.

DAVID HENRY HWANG: I had no real relationship with the material. I mean, I knew it was one of the four great Chinese novels, along with *The Three Kingdoms*, *The Water Margin*, and *Journey to the West*. But my Chinese is horrible, so I couldn’t actually read it in the original language. And even now my knowledge of the book is still pretty superficial. But I have the benefit of collaborating with Bright, who has a long history with the novel, and Stan, who’s digested *Dream of the Red Chamber* throughout most of his professional life.

STAN LAI: *Dream of the Red Chamber* has resonated with me ever since I first read it as a freshman in college. Some of the story’s structural sensibility has made its way into my own work, particularly the idea that something so simple and normal-looking on the surface can underneath be very profound. Much of the profundity

and I grew up in Los Angeles, so consequently his will is much stronger than mine. First, he said, “At some point in your life, you have to read this book, so here’s your chance.” But more importantly, Bright had a vision of how to tell the story. So I agreed, provided we share the credit, since half the work of a librettist is determining the structure.

SHENG: I did a synopsis that David was very happy with, and after that we worked very closely. I had a general vision, but he wrote every word. He was able to sketch rich domestic scenes and bring out the different personalities of each character in only a few lines. That was masterful.

LAI: I came into the project after the first draft of the libretto was finished and immediately embraced the major choices that David and Bright had made. It was, I should add, a gross simplification of the novel. The process is by definition rough to the author, even if you’re being loyal to the story. So while there’s a big discount in terms of detail, we’ve tried not to discount the novel’s profundity.



Dai Yu

"I do not use detailed designs on the fabric itself, as in real silk brocade," says Dream of the Red Chamber production designer Tim Yip. "Instead, my costume designs are more abstract, allowing you to sense the body within—or perhaps the aura of character's spirit." Characters are distinguished by different colors. For Dai Yu, green reflects her living quarters in the garden, surrounded by bamboo. The embossed gold patterns on Bao Chai's robe remind you that she comes from a rich family. "Bao Chai's costumes signify a woman who's rational, orderly, and pure," says Yip.

We've established that *Red Chamber* is a teeming epic, even by operatic standards. What did it take to restructure 2,500 pages into a manageable two-act opera?

SHENG: We all had long conversations about just what this novel is about, which is something not even Redologists can agree on. In opera, you have to boil down the material to one major element. The problem with *War and Peace* as an opera—and Prokofiev was an experienced composer—is that he wasn't daring enough in his cuts. In the novel, the love story was just a sideline. In an opera, of course, you want to beef up the love story. You can't disregard the politics, since that's what the novel was all about. So, in the end, the opera tried to do both equally and lost focus. For us, *Red Chamber* is a love story. The main point isn't the political intrigue, though we've kept that as the historical backdrop.

HWANG: It's easier to talk about what we kept than what we jettisoned. The love triangle, I think, is pretty universal. People can relate to that, and it's essential and true to the novel. But we also have the Jia family, incredibly wealthy but now in decline. There's a constant tension just below the surface, which later became a metaphor for the decline of Imperial China—sort of like *Downton Abbey* of the Qing Dynasty. And so elements that have to do with the political machinations and how the Emperor manipulates this corruption to bring down the family is a crucial sociopolitical aspect. And also, it's just good plot material, in a sort of *House of Cards* fashion.

LAI: We've entered this opera with the best intentions, which does give us some poetic license. For me, it was a process of discovering how to take something that might take up a whole chapter in the novel and translate it into a single image on stage.

Audiences in San Francisco will surely be calling this a "Chinese" opera, but it resembles nothing that you'd see on stage in China. Do you think audiences there would find it "Chinese" enough? Was your goal to emphasize international storytelling with a Chinese story, or to bring a Chinese story to the international stage?

HWANG: As the most "American" of the group, my role has been to bring an outsider's perspective. One distinction I've noticed between contemporary Western and traditional Chinese storytelling styles is that the latter tends towards episodic narrative. In other words, traditional Chinese epics are a bit like pre-cable television: chapters can often be viewed by themselves or out of order without too much impact on the larger story. Translating *Red Chamber* into a Western dramatic mode involved steering the action towards a climactic event.



Bao Yu



Bao Chai

Granny Jia



"You'll find that quite a few of the robes are expansive, almost like mounted kites ready to fly off with the wind," says Yip. "You'll also see that I chose a lot of sheer materials, so that light can pass through, again creating a layering effect. Besides adding depth, back lighting can also change the hues depending on how the light is cast." Again, color is key. The brown of Granny Jia, for instance, represents stability and unquestioned authority. "Granny Jia provides the structure on which the family is built," says Yip.

SHENG: Any great opera has a great story. *Tosca* and *La Traviata* have come to China, where people have a totally different culture, and audiences were still touched by the music and the drama. We were making *Dream of the Red Chamber* for an international audience. Whether the audience is Chinese or Western, a touching story about ill-fated love should appeal to everyone.

LAI: I don't see it in terms of China and the West. My job is to tell the story in whatever way resonates most deeply with the audience. The story already encapsulates the whole Chinese mind and experience. Even if you bring a whole avant-garde European flavor to it—which I'm definitely not, by the way—the story will still come out Chinese. If we were doing it for a Chinese audience, there's only one big change I would suggest, which is to perform it in Chinese. As far as staging is concerned, I think there's sufficient visual language in common for what we do to resonate in Beijing as well.

Which was harder, translating this work on a linguistic-cultural level or instilling an ancient story with contemporary relevance?

LAI: I think both are equally challenging. For example, the opera has a wedding scene. In Chinese tradition, wedding ceremonies are very different: the couple gives their offerings to the heavens and the parents, and then they're married. But how do we make this clear to an audience in San Francisco today?

SHENG: David Hwang and I have worked well in this type of adaptation right from our first collaboration, *The Silver River*. Because I spent the first half of my life in China, I completely understand the way Chinese culture sees the story. David comes from an almost purely Western point of view. So we both have to be happy with what we come up with before we move forward. And with Stan, whose background is mainly in modern drama, we work through yet another perspective.

HWANG: The love triangle is highly relatable to a contemporary audience, but it's different from Western romantic conventions because of the novel's spiritual framework: the *uber*-story about the stone and the flower. On some otherworldly plane, the stone has continually watered the flower with morning dew for thousands of years. The flower wants to express her gratitude, so they ask a priest if she and the stone can be incarnated as humans and express earthly love. The priest warns against it, but they do it anyway. And this metaphysical element sets up an interesting thematic question: to what extent can true love exist in a corrupt, material

Princess Jia



Dancer





“Two things strike me about novelist Cao Xueqin’s Dream of the Red Chamber and have influenced my visual designs,” says production designer Tim Yip. “If we trace the actual history of the Cao family, which also experienced its own heyday and demise, the family trade was in silk brocade. Clearly, looms are very important to these people, and you’ll notice that my set design has strings suspending different panels that rise and fall during the opera. These strings are like threads that interweave, adding texture and depth. When back lighting is added, they create the idea of weaving ‘dreams’ and ‘illusions.’”

world? And that, too, is a very contemporary, universal concern.

SHENG: One of the things that our version makes plain—and this point has been almost entirely neglected by Redologists—is that Bao Yu and Dai Yu are the only two characters whose lives were pre-ordained. They don’t realize it right away. They don’t even live in the same house until Dai Yu’s mother passes away. But still they were destined to find each other as soulmates.

The novel is known for being a one-stop guide to Chinese traditions, with highly detailed descriptions of daily life in the Qing dynasty. What were the most challenging details to put on stage today?

HWANG: Fortunately, most of the physical details fall into Stan’s and Tim’s departments. What’s challenging from a libretto standpoint is that everything is stated in such an indirect fashion. For example, no one just comes out and says they love someone. Conveying this refinement of speech, while also making the story clear to a contemporary American audience, took some work. Bright would often give me notes that a passage I’d written was too baldly stated!

SHENG: There’s a moment in the last scene in Act I where the princess, now the Emperor’s favorite concubine, comes home with gifts from the Emperor. She has fans for both Bao Yu and Bao Chai, and they’re obviously a pair. It’s a clear message. Marriage back then was not decided by love but by social status, and now even the Emperor supports this union. It’s a bombshell for Dai Yu, and the cliffhanger for the audience at the end of Act I. I didn’t just want to illustrate it in the score with a gong or something, because that wouldn’t be elegant. But I did add a stage direction: “Dai Yu collapses to her knees.” The rest is Stan’s job.



LAI: This is the kind of thing that any Chinese person would understand immediately, but we had to make sure Western audiences realized that the Emperor himself is playing matchmaker. Another example is in Act II, when Dai Yu burns her poetry while Bao Yu is lamenting that they won’t be able to marry. Tim Yip and I had set that scene somewhere in the garden, but we weren’t specific. So I decided to move Bao Yu to the same point where he’d spied on Dai Yu earlier as she was catching blossoms and burying them. Now we have Bao Yu recalling this scene in his aria at the same time Dai Yu is burning her poetry. This is one of the most famous scenes in the whole novel and an image that resonates very deeply in Chinese culture. 🌸

Ken Smith divides his time between New York and Hong Kong, where he is the Asian performing arts critic of the Financial Times. A winner of the ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award for distinguished music writing, he is also the author of Fate, Luck, Chance...The Making of The Bonesetter’s Daughter Opera.

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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.



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Above illustration by Olivia Warnecke based on woman's informal coat with scenes from Dream of the Red Chamber (detail), approx. 1900–1950. China. Silk. Courtesy of Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Merrill Randol Sherwin and Dr. Stephen A. Sherwin, 2014.2.
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Dream of the Red Chamber donors as of August 19, 2016

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



Diane B. Wilsey (Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor, *Andrea Chénier*)

Longtime San Francisco Opera board member, patron and Opera Ball supporter, Dede Wilsey believes deeply in the transformative power of the arts, particularly the multi-faceted world of opera. Says Dede, “It’s a marvelous spectacle. From the voices and pageantry to the scenery, costumes, and acting, opera fills the senses and takes you to another place.” She also believes fervently that such experiences should be available to all. “We work hard to make events open to the public at no cost,” she explains. “And because a love of any art form starts at a young age, we take opera into the schoolroom.”

Thanks to Dede’s generosity, opera enthusiasts of all ages have much to celebrate. As Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor for the eleventh consecutive year, she is supporting the opening production of the 2016-17 Season, *Andrea Chénier*, the celebratory floral arrangements that grace the War Memorial Opera House on September 9, and the free, annual *Opera in the Park* concert at Sharon Meadow on September 11. Dede’s leadership support was critical in the creation of the Wilsey Center for Opera, a dynamic, intimate new space at the Veterans Building, which opened in spring, 2016. The Center consolidates the Company’s activities onto the War Memorial Campus, enabling San Francisco Opera to engage in exciting new programming and education work. Dede’s philanthropic commitment to the community extends to many organizations. She is president of the Fine Arts Museums. She serves on the boards of the San Francisco Ballet, Grace Cathedral, the War Memorial, and is a lifetime trustee of UCSF.

Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem/Conductors Fund and Emerging Stars Fund (Sponsors, Maestro Luisotti, J’Nai Bridges and David Pershall, *Andrea Chénier*; Irene Roberts, *Dream of the Red Chamber*)

After a career devoted to his publishing businesses in Japan and Europe, the creation of Clos Pegase Winery in California’s Napa Valley, and his art collection, Jan Shrem, in joyous partnership with his wife Maria Manetti Shrem, is bringing his focus and affection to philanthropic causes that advance education and the performing and visual arts. Though they grew up half-a-world apart, Jan and Maria both developed a love of opera at a young age. While their lives led them each around the globe, their individual passions eventually led them to San Francisco Opera, and to each other. With a substantial, multi-year commitment, Company Sponsors Jan and Maria have expanded their support with the establishment of three different funds. The *Conductors Fund* helps ensure the continued appearances of Maestro Nicola Luisotti and other Italian conductors in the orchestra pit. The *Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund*, helps bring today’s most compelling artists in Italian repertoire to San Francisco Opera, and the *Emerging Stars Fund* supports the Company in showcasing several exciting rising young stars on our stage throughout the season.



DREW ALTIZER

Joan and David Traitel/Great Singers Fund (Sponsors, Yonghoon Lee, Anna Pirozzi and George Gagnidze, *Andrea Chénier*)

“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 San Francisco Opera debut of three stellar artists as the season opens. We know that they will each bring their own special brand of musical beauty,

artistry and dynamic stage presence to *Andrea Chénier*. We are so pleased that the Fund can enable their appearance. I hope people see the relationship between the Great Singers Fund and this season’s fantastic lineup. Your support truly can make a difference! These amazing artists make an evening special, and at the end you walk away happy.”



DREW ALTIZER

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Barbara A. Wolfe (Production Sponsor, *Andrea Chénier*)

Barbara Wolfe has been a longtime opera fan and supporter of the San Francisco Opera since 1985. Mozart, operas in the classical Italian tradition, and the works of Wagner are particular favorites. With her late husband Tom, Barbara has sponsored many San Francisco productions, including *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *The Magic Flute*, *Mefistofele*, *Norma*, and *Don Carlo*. Barbara serves on the board of the San Francisco Opera Association, and was a longtime trustee at Mills College. She has supported educational programs and scholarships at several primary and secondary schools, graduate scholarship programs at Mills College, UC Davis Veterinary School, The UCSF Foundation, and the ARCS program in Northern California.



THE
ANDREW W.

MELLON
FOUNDATION

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Production Sponsor, *Dream of the Red Chamber*)

Founded in 1969, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation endeavors to strengthen, promote, and, where necessary, defend the contributions of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the well-being of diverse and democratic societies by supporting exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work. Additional information is available at mellon.org. "We are deeply honored to partner with the Mellon Foundation on the creation of vanguard new works such as *Dream of the Red Chamber*, made possible by the Foundation's generosity," says General Director Matthew Shillock.

The Chinese Heritage Foundation

(Commissioning Sponsor, *Dream of the Red Chamber*)

Based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the Chinese Heritage Foundation supports the preservation and promotion of Chinese history, culture and heritage, and encourages innovation in the arts. Through our grant awards and outreach programs, we actively seek common ground in which to further mutual understanding among all peoples. In initiating and funding the commission of a 21st-century operatic treatment of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, one of the best known and most beloved novels in Chinese literature, we wish to engage the contemporary audience, win its empathy for our tragic story, and deepen its understanding of life in 18th-century China. We applaud San Francisco Opera, particularly its General Director Emeritus David Gockley, for supporting our goals and creating a production that will have a lasting influence well beyond in the opera world. "Pearl Lam Bergad and the Chinese Heritage Foundation have been the dynamic, creative impetus behind this incredible new work. They passionately believed in telling this seminal work of Chinese literature on the operatic stage and we are proud to be partnering with them to bring it to life. We are deeply grateful for their generosity and vision," said General Director Matthew Shillock.



www.chineseheritagefoundation.org

The Chinese Heritage Foundation is deeply grateful to its donors for their steadfast conviction and generous support in funding the commission of *Dream of the Red Chamber*.

\$50,000 & above: Ruth Stricker & the late Bruce Dayton • Benjamin Y. H. & Helen C. Liu
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SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund

(Production Sponsor, *Dream of the Red Chamber*)

Longtime San Francisco Opera board member, donor and subscriber Jeannik Méquet Littlefield provided distinguished support and leadership to the Company for decades. She developed a life-long passion for opera starting with her childhood in France, where she was introduced to the grand operatic tradition. The Littlefield Family has historically supported the traditional works she loved; however, this year they decided to sponsor the world premiere of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, in memory of Edmund and Jeannik's special fascination with China. The Littlefields were fortunate to visit China in the 1970's with Henry Kissinger, as diplomatic relations were opening up to the U.S.A. The Littlefield Family is proud to support the talented team that has created *Dream of the Red Chamber*, based on the beloved Chinese epic. The Littlefield name became especially familiar to opera fans in 2006, when Jeannik Littlefield made her historic \$35 million commitment to San Francisco Opera. The creation of the Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Endowment Fund provided a permanent and unrestricted source of income for the Company, and a legacy of support for generations to come. The Littlefield Family is delighted to support *Dream of the Red Chamber*—their 21st production since 2002—as part of their Company Sponsorship.

National Endowment for the Arts

(Production Sponsor, *Dream of the Red Chamber*)

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



United Airlines (Production Sponsor, *Dream of the Red Chamber*)

United is committed to serving the communities where our customers and employees live and work. As a global airline, we focus on promoting awareness of cultural diversity by supporting organizations that bring the diversity of the world to local communities. United is the official airline of San Francisco Opera and flies artists from around the world to the front of the stage. San Francisco Opera is grateful for the continued partnership and thanks United for its generous support of *Dream of the Red Chamber* and the 2016–17 Season.

Wells Fargo (Season Sponsor)

As the San Francisco Opera's corporate Season Sponsor for over a decade, Wells Fargo is a proud supporter of the arts in the Bay Area. Wells Fargo'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. Founded in 1852, the company celebrated its 164th anniversary this year, and supporting arts and culture has been a part of its history since the days when Wells Fargo stagecoaches brought actors, musicians and other performing artists to the West. As the oldest and largest financial services company headquartered in California, Wells Fargo has top financial professionals providing business banking, investments, brokerage, trust, mortgage, insurance, consumer finance and much more. Wells Fargo has helped generations of families build, manage, preserve, and transfer wealth with personalized advice and services to satisfy all their customers' financial needs and help them succeed financially.



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; 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.

Major support also provided by

The Great Singers Fund, established by Joan & David Traitel

The Conductors Fund, the Emerging Stars Fund, and the Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund, all established by Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem.

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All performances feature English supertitles. Repertoire, casts, dates, and ticket pricing are subject to change.

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HERMÈS BY NATURE





BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Umberto Giordano

ANDREA CHÉNIER

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Matthew Shilvock,
General Director

Nicola Luisotti,
Music Director

Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair



Andrea Chénier is made possible, in part, by
Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey.

Major funding is also provided by
John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn and Barbara A. Wolfe.

Maestro Luisotti's appearance
is made possible by the Conductors Fund,
and J'Nai Bridges', and David Pershall's
appearances are made possible by the Emerging Stars Fund,
both established by Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem.

Mr. Lee's, Ms. Pirozzi's, and Mr. Gagnidze's appearances
are made possible by a gift to the Great Singers Fund from
Joan and David Traitel.

ANDREA CHÉNIER

ACT I

The Winter Garden at the Coigny Château, 1789

The Contessa di Coigny is about to host an elaborate party. One of her footmen, Carlo Gérard, looks forward to the imminent destruction of the aristocracy's privileged lives. The Contessa enters, as does her daughter Maddalena with her companion Bersi and gives orders to the servants. Gérard, who has been secretly in love with Maddalena since they were children, watches resentfully. The guests include the writer Pietro Fléville, who has brought with him the poet Andrea Chénier and the musician Flando Fiorinelli. The Contessa's Abbé arrives with the latest news from Paris. The guests are alarmed by his tales of political unrest in the capital. Fléville attempts to distract them; the Contessa asks Chénier to recite a poem but he declines. At Maddalena's provoking insistence, Chénier improvises some verses, contrasting his patriotic love for France with the idle indifference of the aristocracy. Moved and shamed, Maddalena rushes from the room. The Contessa's guests are appalled by Chénier's words, but not Gérard. The angry voices of a mob are suddenly heard outside, approaching the château. Gérard flings open the windows to let the storming peasants in. The Contessa orders the footmen to throw them out. Gérard defies her and leaves with the crowd. The Contessa is shaken but commands that the party continue.

ACT II

Paris, 1794

France has been in the throes of Revolution for five years. The King and Queen have been executed and the government, dominated by Robespierre's Jacobin party, have imposed "The Terror." Chénier is seated at a table, writing. Mathieu, a *sans-culotte*, is busily attending to an altar to the Revolutionary martyr Marat. Bersi, now a *merveilleuse*, is also there, closely observed by the Incredible, a spy for the radical Jacobins. Confronting him, she declares herself to be a patriotic daughter of the Revolution, but the Incredible is suspicious of her connection to a mysterious fair-haired woman he is searching for. Chénier's friend Roucher arrives with a passport he has procured for him. Initially a leading figure of the Revolution, Chénier has become an outspoken critic of the Jacobins. Roucher advises him to leave France as soon as possible. Chénier is reluctant; he is intrigued by a series of letters from a mysterious woman who signs herself as "Hope."

A crowd gathers to see the Representatives of the National Convention process by, led by Robespierre himself. Gérard, having prospered in the Revolution, is now a popular Jacobin. The Incredible draws him aside; it is Gérard who has set him the task of finding the fair woman he suspects to be associated with Bersi. Bersi tells Chénier that "Hope" will come to meet him that evening. As darkness falls, the mysterious woman appears and Chénier approaches her. It is Maddalena. Hidden for months by Bersi, she has written to Chénier in the desperate hope that he remembers her and will offer her his protection. They realize that they love each other. The couple is suddenly surprised by Gérard and the Incredible. Roucher drags Maddalena away to safety as Chénier draws his sword and wounds Gérard. Recognizing the poet whose words inspired him five years earlier, Gérard warns Chénier to flee with Maddalena; Chénier's name is on the list of the Public Prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville. When the Jacobins arrive, Gérard says he does not know who attacked him.

ACT III

Chénier and Maddalena have fled Paris and are in hiding. Mathieu attempts to stir up support for the Revolutionary cause; France is in danger, threatened by foreign invasion and internal rebellion. But the crowd is silent. Gérard arrives, recovered from his wounds, and arouses the people with an impassioned plea. He directs the women to offer their sons and jewels to the Revolution. A blind old woman, Madelon, comes forward. She has lost both her son and eldest grandson, and now offers her youngest grandson in their place. The crowd is moved and gives whatever they can before filing out. The Incredible has not given up his pursuit of Maddalena and he now arrives to tell Gérard that Chénier has been taken. The Incredible is certain that Maddalena will be forced out of hiding and will try to rescue her lover. Despite himself, Gérard is tasked with framing an indictment against the poet. He reflects bitterly on his hypocrisy in denouncing Chénier. Once the servant of the aristocracy, he has become the slave of his own passions.

Maddalena comes to plead for Chénier's life. Gérard confesses his uncontrollable desire for her. She offers herself in exchange for Chénier's freedom. She recalls the terrible death of her mother, the Contessa, butchered by a mob before her eyes. She remembers fleeing with Bersi and how Bersi hid her in Paris. Only Chénier's love has sustained her. Gérard swears to do all he can to save Chénier, as the public now swarms into the hall for the latest show-trial. Three defendants, including a young mother, Idia Legray, are quickly dealt with, but when Fouquier-Tinville reads out the indictment against Chénier, he demands to be heard. Gérard comes forward and repudiates his own accusations. But the mob turns against their erstwhile hero and howls him down. The jury quickly deliberates and returns their verdict: the court condemns Chénier to be guillotined.

ACT IV

Chénier reads his final poem to Roucher, comparing the sunset of his life to the end of a fine spring day. Moved, Roucher embraces his friend and leaves with the verses in his hand. Gérard arrives with Maddalena. They bribe the jailer, Schmidt, into letting her take the place of Idia Legray, condemned to die that morning alongside Chénier. Gérard bids her farewell and leaves to plead once more with Robespierre for the life of Chénier. Alone together, Chénier and Maddalena jubilantly prepare for death. The dawn rises with no word from Robespierre. The lovers go to the guillotine.

First performance: Teatro alla Scala, Milan; March 28, 1896

First performance in the U.S.: Academy of Music, New York; November 13, 1896

First San Francisco Opera performance: September 27, 1923

The opera has been performed in 11 previous seasons at San Francisco Opera. For a complete record of all past casts, please visit archive.sfopera.com.

Personnel: 15 principals, 56 choristers, 5 dancers, 33 supernumeraries; **109 total.**

Orchestra: 3 flutes (2 doubling on piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling on English horn), 2 clarinets (1 doubling on bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 tuba, 1 timpani, 3 percussion, 1 harp, 40 strings (12 first violins, 9 second violins, 7 violas, 7 cellos, 5 basses); **65 total.**

Conductor
Nicola Luisotti

Director
David McVicar

Set Designer
Robert Jones*

Costume Designer
Jenny Tiramani*

Lighting Designer
Adam Silverman

Associate Lighting Designer
Gary Marder

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Original Choreographer
Andrew George

Revival Choreographer
Colm Seery

Assistant Conductor
Jordi Bernàcer

Musical Preparation
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San Francisco Opera co-production with
Royal Opera House, Covent Garden
and the National Centre for the
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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2016 AT 8 PM
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 AT 7:30 PM
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 AT 7:30 PM
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 AT 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 AT 2 PM
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 AT 7:30 PM

Opera in four acts by **Umberto Giordano**
Libretto by **Luigi Illica**

ANDREA CHÉNIER

(Sung in Italian with English supertitles)

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Carlo Gérard</i>	George Gagnidze*
<i>Major-Domo</i>	Anders Fröhlich
<i>An Old Gardener (Gérard's father)</i>	Charlie Lichtman
<i>Maddalena di Coigny</i>	Anna Pirozzi*
<i>Bersi</i>	J'Nai Bridges*
<i>Contessa di Coigny</i>	Catherine Cook
<i>Pietro Fléville</i>	Edward Nelson†
<i>Flando Fiorinelli</i>	Matthew Erikson*
<i>Andrea Chénier</i>	Yonghoon Lee*
<i>The Abbé</i>	Alex Boyer
<i>Shepherdess</i>	Laura Alexich*
<i>Shepherd</i>	Michael Levine
<i>Mathieu</i>	Robert Pomakov
<i>Orazio Coclite</i>	Travis Rowland
<i>The Incredible (An Incroyable)</i>	Joel Sorensen
<i>Roucher</i>	David Pershall*
<i>Madelon</i>	Jill Grove
<i>Madelon's Grandson</i>	Graham Isom
<i>Fouquier-Tinville</i>	Matthew Stump†
<i>Dumas</i>	Brad Walker†
<i>Gravier de Vergennes</i>	Charlie Lichtman
<i>Laval-Montmorency</i>	Susan Anderson-Norby
<i>Idia Legray</i>	Tatiana Bookbinder*
<i>Schmidt</i>	Anthony Reed†

*Aristocrats, servants, footmen, shepherdesses, shepherds, sans-culottes, urchins,
merveilleuses, representatives, soldiers, jurors*

*San Francisco Opera debut †Current Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: Paris, shortly before and during the French Revolution

ACT I: The Winter Garden at the Coigny Château, 1789

ACT II: The Café Hottot by the Perronet Bridge; Paris, 1794

—INTERMISSION—

ACT III: The Hall of the Revolutionary Tribune; a few months later

ACT IV: The courtyard of the Prison Saint-Lazare; the next morning, before dawn

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 and a half hours.



The Redeeming Power of

Andrea Chénier

For a time at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the verismo movement looked as if it would have a long run. With its lean, tense stories of the struggles and tragedies of everyday people, verismo looked like a bracing, contemporary antidote to the nobles and heroes of French and Italian grand opera and the weighty musical and philosophical concepts of Wagner.

It's a good thing that Umberto Giordano, one of the leading verismo composers of the day, isn't around to see what is left of his reputation, which rests (as many of the verists' reputations do) on a single work, *Andrea Chénier*. The opera was a smashing suc-

cess when it premiered at La Scala on March 28, 1896. For decades afterward, *Chénier* has been the subject of critical arrows, but it has never been dismissed as swiftly as it is today. Writing of a disappointing 2014 Metropolitan Opera revival, *The New York Times*' Zachary Woolfe complained about "the flatness of the characters, the slackness between the memorable melodies. This is a score that exists to be set aflame by singers." A year later, in a positive review of the Royal Opera's David McVicar production—now being staged here in San Francisco—*The Daily Telegraph*'s Rupert Christiansen attacked the work as "a score of the third class—music of shreds and patches, bombastic and crude, fueled by hot air."



©BILL COOPER/ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

Act III's trial scene from the 2015 premiere of David McVicar's production of Andrea Chénier at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

I don't think any of us would make any outrageous claims about the dramatic structure or depth of *Chénier*. But as a gutsy, florid musical entertainment, it has generally given excellent value. Christiansen's "bombastic" is a word that has often been used by other critics, and in fact the opera does open in *ff* (very loud) and end in *fff* (even more loud), offering a lot of big moments that aren't well integrated dramatically and seem to exist purely as a chance for vocal showing-off. But have we reached a point when big-scale vocalism is a bad thing? Or does *Chénier*'s bad rap stem from the fact that so few artists today are capable of creating the proper vocal fireworks?

GLOSSARY OF FRENCH REVOLUTION TERMS AND HISTORICAL FIGURES

(in order of appearance in the opera)

Tacco rosso (red heel): The gentlemen of the French aristocracy favored red-heeled shoes.

Jacques Necker: A Swiss banker made Minister of Finance by Louis XVI, he was entrusted with solving France's crippling economic problems. His failure to do so was a major spur to the Revolution.

The Third Estate: Established in 1789 to sit in Parliament alongside the aristocracy and church, the Third Estate represented "the People" of France, though it was almost entirely composed of the bourgeois and professional classes. Their transformation of themselves into the National Assembly triggered the Revolution.

Sans-culottes: Literally "without knee-breeches," they were the radical, left-wing working classes who made up the ground troops of the Revolution in its early years.

Incroyables and merveilleuses: In reality a revivalist aristocratic movement that flourished from 1795–99, they were remarkable for the extremity of their dress. The *merveilleuses* based their gowns on Greek and Roman models with revealing results that cast doubts on their sexual morals. Librettist Luigi Illica transfers them back to the Reign of Terror, maybe to add historical color to the opera.

Jean-Paul Marat: A scientist and writer, he was a powerful Jacobin and an instigator of the Terror. He was murdered, lying in his bath, by a Girondist sympathizer, Charlotte Corday, in 1793, and was subsequently celebrated as a martyr of the Revolution.

Charles-Henri Sanson: He and his son Henri were the public executioners of Paris. The tumbrel that took the prisoners (including Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette) to the place of execution was known as "Sanson's chariot."

Maximilien François Marie Isidore de Robespierre: The leader of the Jacobin party, he signed André Chénier's death warrant with a single sentence: "Even Plato banned poets from his Republic." Just three days after Chénier's execution, Robespierre was himself seized and guillotined. It is Robespierre's younger brother, **Augustin**, whom Chénier mockingly calls in Act II "the little Robespierre."

Antoine Fouquier-Tinville: The fearsome prosecutor of the Committee of Public Safety, he was responsible for putting on trial and disposing of enemies of the State as quickly and efficiently as possible. He was executed himself in 1795.

François Chabot: A revolutionary who began his career as a monk, he was a notoriously bad swordsman, hence Chénier's mocking use of his name to taunt Gérard in Act II.

Charles François Dumouriez: Initially a national hero and general of the Revolutionary army, he fell from favor with the rise of the Jacobins and was denounced by the National Assembly. He defected to the Austrians and was declared a traitor.



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ARCHIVES/LAWRENCE B. MORTON

Giordano’s reputation suffered fairly quickly in comparison with the king of verists, Giacomo Puccini. But is *Andrea Chénier* really deserving of such backdoor treatment? Giordano may not have been able to touch Puccini in depth and detail of orchestration, but Chénier leaves *Manon Lescaut* in the dust when it comes to melodic power and variety; it also gives us a deeper glimpse into the human heart than *Turandot* and is far less ludicrous dramaturgically than *Suor Angelica*.

But perhaps *Andrea Chénier*’s principal redeeming feature is its gut-level honesty and lack of pretense—we don’t have the feeling that we’re being lied to, as we may in several of Puccini’s works.

Giordano and Puccini had a librettist in common: Luigi Illica, who had initially written the text for Alberto Franchetti but decided to pass it on to his good friend Giordano. Illica’s scripts for *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, and *Tosca* are models of economy: Puccini was noted for spending endless time overseeing the development of the libretto, believing it to be the indispensable basis of all great opera. His works move swiftly—almost too swiftly at times—from point to point, and we may feel that we have little time to respond freely to the characters and action, since the composer has done so much of the work for us already.

But it’s easy to agree with Puccini biographer Mosco Carner that Illica may have lacked Giuseppe Giacosa’s “poetic vision” but surpassed him in “the profuse invention of telling theatrical inci-

dents and the elaboration of a varied and flexible plot.”

Carner believes that Giordano might have done well to emulate Puccini’s slavish devotion to developing the libretto; he credits Giordano with making a half-joking comment about the key to success: “Find a good song, and then build an opera around it!”

But Giordano and Illica did far more than that in *Chénier*. The first act of the opera sets up a ripe musical and dramatic situation in its delineation of the Countess di Coigny’s grand salon, and the seething revolutionary tensions that boil beneath it, as personified by the ambitious, embittered servant Gérard, who hates the “gilded house” of his employers and predicts that their hour of doom is near. Properly staged, this act can get the opera off to a marvelous start: we are bound to cringe at the fawning of the guests over the fatuous Countess. Giordano’s treatment of the madrigal that Fléville has selected to entertain the Countess’ guests is also deft: it hauntingly foreshadows the collapse of the aristocrats’ world and sounds almost like a lament. The quiet resentment of Chénier as he listens to the Abbé recite the news of the court is also tremendously effective, as is his opening aria, “Un di all’azzurro spazio,” which begins as a rhapsodic romance and erupts into an angry statement of revolutionary fervor. This sets up Gérard’s smuggling in of the hungry peasants, the Countess’s horrified reaction, and Gérard’s angry resignation. *Chénier*’s status as a true verismo work has sometimes been questioned, given its French Revolution setting and the fact

Left: San Francisco Opera's 1938 production of *Andrea Chénier* boasted Beniamino Gigli in the title role. The tenor also appeared as Chénier in the Company's 1923 and 1924 performances. Captured in this photograph is Act I's Coigny Château.

Right: In San Francisco Opera's 1975 production of *Andrea Chénier*, Plácido Domingo performed the title role. Domingo has said that Chénier is "less interesting dramatically," than the character Gérard. "Chénier is an idealist whose head is always in the clouds." In 1975, baritone Cornell MacNeil played opposite Domingo as the servant-turned-revolutionary Gérard.



GREG PETERSON/SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ARCHIVE

Does Chénier's bad rap stem from the fact that so few artists today are capable of creating the proper vocal fireworks?

that it deals with a poet and a fallen aristocrat. But the opera's true nature is revealed in this first act: Gérard's anger over his situation and the pathetic groveling of his elderly and infirm father is unquestionably the stuff of verismo.

For the remainder of the opera, this verismo strain comes and goes as the plot mechanics take over and the principal (and several secondary) characters all get their moments in the sun vocally. These mechanics are often quite effective: the second act, with Maddalena's companion Bersi operating undercover, and the Revolutionary forces closing in on Chénier, are neatly played out. But in the third act, Gérard steps forward as the opera's verist heart and soul. He's a fascinating character, and one of the fullest creations in the verismo repertoire: a faint-hearted Revolutionary whose position of power is threatened by his unrequited passion for Maddalena and his high regard for the character of Chénier. His great aria "Nemico della patria" shows us his recognition that he is still a servant, "now as always, with different masters"; it then blooms into a painful admission of how he has missed out on the beauty of life. The scene in which he tries to force Maddalena to surrender to him sexually is very close in some ways to the second act of *Tosca*, with Scarpia trying to force Tosca to submit to him. But Gérard emerges as a far chewier character than Scarpia: after telling Maddalena that even against her will, she will be his, he relents when he realizes the depth of her love for Chénier. And

while Maddalena's famous aria "La mamma morta" does seem to come out of nowhere, dropped abruptly into the scene, it's quite possible that Giordano and Illica intended it to be seen as a guilt-tripping of Gérard: when he sees how much she has suffered, he vows to try to save Chénier's life; when he fails to do that, he ultimately (in a lift from *A Tale of Two Cities*) enables Maddalena to take the place of the doomed Idia Legray and die with Chénier at the guillotine.

In a sense, Gérard can be seen as a male counterpart to Amneris in *Aida*, creating the circumstances of the final love-death of his beloved and his rival. It's a glorious role for the baritone, and many tenors singing the title role have wished they were playing Gérard, notably Plácido Domingo who complained that Chénier was "an idealist whose head is always in the clouds." "Certainly he is the 'better' character of the two," Domingo wrote in his autobiography, *My First Forty Years*, "but he is less interesting dramatically." Chénier and Maddalena, at the very least, get the spectacular duet "Vicino a te" to themselves. Unlike Puccini, who often chose not to write a fresh, excerptable number for his finales, Giordano goes out in a blaze, providing the soprano and tenor with a glorious shared high B, as exciting a finale

as any in Italian opera.

It has fallen to high-voltage singers to keep *Andrea Chénier* alive. In our own time, Aprile Millo distinguished herself as Maddalena at the Met, opposite Luciano Pavarotti, and Jonas Kaufmann has triumphed as Chénier at the Royal Opera. The most flavorful performance of the opera I have heard in the theater came in 1996 at Seattle Opera, in a production starring Ben Heppner and Diana Soviero, conducted by Steven Mercurio, in which everyone entered wholeheartedly and unapologetically into the opera's spirit.

Perhaps this is a key part of the contemporary difficulty with accepting *Andrea Chénier*. The opera deals in huge emotions and bold compositional and dramatic strokes; it requires a certain degree of surrender, and it also requires personalities to sing it who can compel us to believe in its gloriously overripe melodrama. Today, the opera world's center of gravity seems to have moved toward those works that are most easily cast: the operas of Mozart, Handel, and many of the bel-canto works. But we should not think of ease of presentation and audience comfort as the only standard of what gets produced. *Andrea Chénier*'s musical rewards are immense—and it would be a shame if we lost sight of that. 🌟

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.



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André Chénier: Poet, Prodigy, Political Martyr

André Chénier could not have imagined, when his life was cut cruelly short at the age of 31, that he would one day be lauded as one of the greatest poets of the eighteenth century. After all, until the moment he was guillotined during the French Revolution, he had only published two poems. But 222 years after his death, Chénier is far more famous in death than in life: lauded as a poet-hero and political martyr of near mythological status, and providing inspiration for numerous plays, works of art, poems, and especially the opera *Andrea Chénier*.

Born in 1762 in Constantinople, where his father was French consul, Chénier became an ardent admirer of the language and civilization of ancient Greece while still in his teens. While studying at the Collège de Navarre in Paris, he excelled in the translation of verses from the classics. And a 1784 visit to Rome, Naples, and Pompeii cemented his ambitions to write in the neoclassical style of the time. Seeing no real reason to forge a new poetic genre, Chénier celebrated the old: “De nouvelles pensées, faisons des vers antiques” (“From new thoughts, let us make antique verses”).

Still, the world was not yet enchanted with the 25-year-old’s verses, and having failed to achieve publishing success, he took a post in 1787 as the secretary to the French consul in London. While there, he studied English poets like John Milton and James Thomson, but ultimately the excitement of political unrest in France proved irresistible. He returned in 1790 and became a member of the Society of ‘89 (the moderate wing of the revolutionary party), launching a secondary career as a political journalist.

Abandoning his gentle idylls for satirical poetry and essay, he attacked the extreme factions on both sides. His essay “Avis au peuple français” took the mobs to task. “This is the spirit of this great and frightening race of shameless pamphleteers,” he railed, “who under glitzy titles and convulsive demonstrations of love for the people and for the country, seek to attract public confidence; people for whom honesty is a painful yoke.”

He became a frequent contributor to the newspaper *Journal de Paris*, which featured his poems of the iambic genre—a form of ancient Greek poetry that often featured coarse language and insults. The insurrection of 1792 scattered the pieces of Chénier’s life, and he only escaped the September Massacres by fleeing Paris to the safety of Normandy. Disillusioned, he withdrew from public life for two years, but, too fascinated by political events, he couldn’t refrain from returning to Paris. It would prove to be a fatal decision.

On March 4, 1794, he was arrested by mistake at the home of friends in Passy when the police were looking for someone else, and taken to St. Lazare Prison, where he would spend the last four



BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

months of his life. There Chénier met the poet Jean-Antoine Roucher, who became his confidant; Louise de Laval-Montmorency, abbess of Montmartre (who has a role in the opera *Andrea Chénier*); and Aimée de Coigny, Duchess of Fleury.

The 23-year-old duchess would become the smitten Chénier’s last muse, inspiring his best verses, written during his imprisonment and smuggled out of the prison in a basket of soiled linen. Those poems contributed immensely to the legend—unfortunately untrue—of Chénier and de Coigny’s tragic love affair.

When Robespierre recalled Chénier’s incendiary poetry in *Journal de Paris*, Chénier was taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal and sentenced to death. A poet until the end, as he stepped onto the

cart with his friend Roucher, they both started reciting verses on their way to the guillotine. Chénier was executed on July 25, ironically only three days before the Reign of Terror would end with Robespierre’s own death.

During Chénier’s lifetime only two of his poems—“Jeu de paume” (1791) and “Hymne sur les Suisses” (1792)—had been published. He was finally discovered in 1819 when poet-novelist Henri de Latouche edited Chénier’s complete poems, and immediately became an idol of the Romantics, such as Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset, who saw in him a forerunner of their movement. Not only was Chénier’s literary influence felt on poetic stylings throughout the nineteenth century, the legend of his martyrdom also made him an enduring symbol of the poet-hero.

And rightly so. Chénier’s poems are a moving testimonial to the human spirit in the face of persecution. He came to view the role of poet as the conscience of a movement, and in his poetry wrote poignantly of his hopes to live long enough to continue the fight.

*It is a poor poet, oh majestic god of the armies,
Who, alone in prison, as death he fights,
Gluing to his verses the flaming wings
Of your thunder that no longer stings...
Just let me stay alive, and that filthy breed
Will feel the power of my pen.*

And despite—and in some ways because of—his death, his poetry does indeed live on. 🌟

Jane Ganahl is the co-founder of Litquake, the West Coast’s largest independent literary festival, and contributor to many magazines from Harper’s Bazaar to Rolling Stone, Ladies’ Home Journal, and San Francisco Opera Magazine.

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A History of the French Revolution



MUSEE DE LA VILLE DE PARIS / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

On June 20, 1789, the members of the Estates-General took the Tennis Court Oath, vowing never to disperse until they had given France a constitution. The oil painting was completed by Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) in 1791.

In the summer of 1788, the French government collapsed. Eighteen months beforehand, a black hole had been revealed in its accounts, as loans incurred in the American War of Independence a decade earlier fell due. Controversial plans to meet the deficit by administrative reforms and new taxes provoked fierce resistance, culminating in demands for King Louis XVI to meet the crisis by convening national representatives in the Estates-General, a body which had not met for 175 years. Finally facing bankruptcy, the king called elections for the spring of 1789. As part of the electoral process, his subjects were encouraged to voice their discontent in lists of instructions (*cahiers*) to those they elected. Coming at a time of serious economic difficulty, with widespread unemployment and rising bread prices, this promise of change raised massive expectations for reform in all areas of national life. But the traditional form of the Estates-General gave the ruling orders (the nobility and the clergy) a built-in voting advantage and thereby the ability to block anything that threatened their interests. It became clear during the elections that most noblemen were determined to preserve these advantages, and when the assembly met in May the representatives of the nobility refused all concessions. The king did nothing to compel them. Only after six weeks of stalemate did the deputies of the Third Estate, representing the remaining 99 per cent

of the French population, lose patience and unilaterally declare themselves the National Assembly. This, June 17, 1789, was the first revolutionary moment, when sovereignty in France passed from the monarch to the Nation. A few days later, in the famous Tennis Court Oath, the revolutionary deputies vowed never to disperse until they had given France a constitution.

Initially it looked as if the king and the nobility had grudgingly accepted these claims. But when troops began to converge on Paris in the following weeks fear spread that an attempt would be made to dissolve the new Assembly by force. The determination of Parisians to defend it led on July 14 to the storming of the Bastille, the grim state prison overlooking the poor east end of the city. The troops were pulled back. The people of Paris had saved the Revolution.

The National Assembly now set about meeting the country's expectations by establishing a constitutional monarchy, elective representative government, and a guaranteed range of civil rights. It also launched social reforms whose main victims were the nobility. The determination of most nobles over the spring to retain their privileges had made them hugely unpopular, and when their leaders began to emigrate after the fall of the Bastille suspicion deepened that they remained unreconciled to the new order. In August, nobles were stripped of their traditional privileges and a Declaration of



MUSÉE DE LA VILLE DE PARIS / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Rights proclaimed that liberty and equality would henceforth be the guiding principles of the French Nation. The following year nobility itself was abolished, and the flow of nobles emigrating increased. Eventually the properties of absent nobles were confiscated. Years of accumulated resentment at the overbearing behavior of “aristocrats” now rose to the surface, as the Revolution progressively became, as one contemporary put it, “Everybody’s revenge.”

These resentments only increased when, in June 1791, the king himself tried to escape with his family, but was recaptured after the “Flight to Varennes.” Almost overnight, Paris became republican. Afraid of having pushed revolution too far, the National Assembly sought to conciliate Louis XVI; but foreign monarchs, urged on by French nobles who had emigrated, had begun to issue threats against the new regime. In a mood of patriotic defiance, symbolized by a new national battle hymn, *La Marseillaise*, and the wearing of red caps of liberty, like freed slaves in ancient times, France declared war against the Austrian Emperor in April 1792. It began disastrously, and it was immediately suspected that the royal family were in secret contact with the enemy: Queen Marie-Antoinette was, after all, an Austrian princess. She and the king were mobbed in the palace by crowds of self-styled *sans-culottes* (wearers of working clothes, signifying poor people). André Chénier, unknown as a poet but an opinion-

ated journalist, denounced this episode, less as a royalist than as a critic of mob rule; but on August 10 the palace was taken by storm and the monarchy overthrown with considerable bloodshed. A few weeks later in early September, as enemy forces marched towards Paris, hundreds of counter-revolutionary suspects were massacred in their prisons by angry and fearful crowds. Until now the Revolution, though turbulent, had been relatively bloodless. Henceforth, it would be forever associated with mass murder, and the new mechanical decapitator, the guillotine, which flooded the streets with blood. Its most famous victim would be Louis XVI himself, executed in January 1793 for crimes against the Nation, after a show trial conducted by the new national representative body, the Convention.

In September 1792 the invaders were turned back at the battle of Valmy, and for six months the French went on to the offensive. Belgium, western Germany, and Alpine neighbors were invaded by armies offering “Fraternity and Help” to all peoples wishing to recover their liberty, with the anti-aristocratic slogan “war on the castles, peace to the cottages.” In response, Britain, Holland, and Spain joined an alliance against the regicide republic, and its expansion ground to a halt. In Paris, the government was immobilized by conflict in the Convention between rival factions of so-called Girondins and Jacobins, the former condemning the

Left: An Execution, Place de la Révolution, between August 1793 and June 1794 (oil on canvas) by Pierre-Antoine Demachy (1723–1807).

Below right: The French Revolution has inspired generations of composers, authors, and filmmakers. In the 1935 film adaptation of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, Ronald Colman starred as Sydney Carton.

intimidating influence of a bloodthirsty Parisian populace, the latter defending it. It was only resolved in June 1793 when the *sans-culottes* forced the expulsion of the Girondin leaders, who some months later were executed. But this forced purging of the Nation's elected representatives created outrage in several of the great provincial cities, who came out in what the beleaguered Jacobins called the "Federalist Revolt." Coinciding with an uprising of royalist peasants in the western region of the Vendée, it was more like a civil war between Paris and the provinces, but in time of war rebellion was nothing less than treason. The crisis reached its peak in early September 1793, when news arrived that Toulon, the great Mediterranean naval port, had surrendered to the British. Once more, the *sans-culottes* mobbed the Convention, demanding that, in order to overcome the republic's enemies, Terror should be made the order of the day. The Convention had little option but to comply. A Revolutionary Tribunal was already in existence to try political crimes, and government was in the hands of the Convention's Committee of Public Safety, whose most prominent member was the "incorruptible" Robespierre.

Under this "revolutionary government," normal rules of civil and political life were suspended until peace was made. The economy was tightly controlled, organized religion (identified as one of the driving forces of counter-revolution) was persecuted, and a new republican calendar was introduced. Egalitarian style was promoted, enforcing familiar forms of address—*Citoyen* (citizen) rather than *Monsieur* or *Madame*—and informal dress. Above all, there was a brutal crackdown on all opposition. Freedom of the press disappeared.

A Law of Suspects allowed anybody to be arrested and imprisoned without trial, and more than 400,000 were. Chénier, though inactive since the previous summer, was arrested under this law in March 1794. Over the preceding autumn the provincial rebellions were gradually brought under control, and savage reprisals followed. Before the Terror ended in July 1794, more than 16,000 death sentences had been handed down by revolutionary courts, and at least as many victims again had probably been dispatched in unrecorded ways. Thousands more had died in prison. Most perished in the provincial centers of revolt, but in the spring of

1794 an attempt was made to bring the Terror under closer control by concentrating trials in Paris. The result was the so-called "Great" Terror, when in four months the Paris Revolutionary Tribunal, and its implacable public prosecutor Fouquier-Tinville, sent 2,177 victims, including André Chénier, to the guillotine. In a desperate effort to clear overcrowded prisons, victims were given increasingly summary trials, with no defense counsel; and although, contrary to legend, only a minority were former nobles, there was a clear increase in their number, now under suspicion

as much for what they had been as for what they had done. In later weeks, the guillotine was moved from the center of Paris to the outskirts, to counter growing disgust at the seemingly endless slaughter—and it was here that Chénier died, only days before the Terror came to an end.

Nobody had planned the Terror, but nobody knew how to end it. To denounce it was to risk accusations of counter-revolution, and fall victim to it oneself, like Danton and his friends in April 1794. Arguably, Terror had saved the republic from its enemies, but it was now secure internally, and in the war French arms were once more proving victorious. Terror seemed to have done its work. So, when late in July (Thermidor in the new republican calendar), Robespierre claimed that more unspecified traitors needed to be culled, there was a revolt

among fellow deputies, afraid that he meant them. Robespierre was shouted down in the Convention and declared an outlaw. On July 27 he in his turn went to the guillotine, and his downfall was made the pretext for ending the Terror.

It was not the end of the Revolution. None of the basic problems which it had thrown up had been resolved. France remained at war for another eight years, and it took the same length of time to settle its quarrel with the Catholic Church. Nor could a stable republican government be found, capable of safeguarding the Revolution's reforms and achievements without the danger of lapsing back into Terror to prevent the return of monarchy. The downfall of Robespierre nearly ended the career of a promising young officer who had successfully planned the recovery of Toulon from its British invaders. But Napoleon Bonaparte survived a brief imprisonment, and six years later it would be he who finally brought the Revolution to an end, and established the stability it never managed to achieve. 🌀



BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

William Doyle is Emeritus Professor of History and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Bristol; his many publications include The Oxford History of the French Revolution (Oxford University Press, 1989; second edition, 2002) and The French Revolution: a Very Short Introduction (Oxford University Press, 2001).

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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 *Luisa Miller*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Don Carlo*. Also 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 lead 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 conduct the Company's productions of *Aida* and *Rigoletto*.



YONGHOON LEE

(Seoul, South Korea)

Andrea Chénier

Tenor Yonghoon Lee is making his San Francisco Opera debut, adding to the other premier companies for

which he has performed, including the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Metropolitan Opera; Deutsche Oper Berlin; Vienna State Opera; Rome Opera; Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam; Bavarian State Opera in Munich; Teatro alla Scala in Milan; Semperoper Dresden; Lyric Opera of Chicago; and Opera Australia. Recently, Lee performed Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, Don José in *Carmen*, the title role of *Don Carlo*, and Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Metropolitan Opera; Don José and Turiddu at Covent Garden; Manrico and

Calaf in *Turandot* at the Bavarian State Opera; and Don José and Calaf with Opera Australia. In spring 2014, Lee sang his first Andrea Chénier at Zurich Opera House. His engagements for the 2016–17 season include Turiddu at the Paris Opéra, Don José at the Semperoper Dresden, Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at the Staatsoper Berlin, Calaf at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Dusseldorf, Manrico at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Pollione in *Norma* at the Dallas Opera, and Don Carlo at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich and in Tokyo.



ANNA PIROZZI

(Naples, Italy)

Maddalena di Coigny

One of the leading sopranos of the Italian dramatic repertory, Anna Pirozzi is making her San Francisco

debut as Maddalena di Coigny in *Andrea Chénier*. In 2013, Pirozzi made her acclaimed Salzburg Festival debut as Abigail in *Nabucco* under the baton of Riccardo Muti. More recent engagements have led the Italian soprano to Turin in the title role of *Aida*; Rome, Leipzig, and Berlin's Deutsche Oper in the title role of *Tosca*; and Milan's Teatro alla Scala as Lucrezia Contarini in *I Due Foscari* alongside Plácido Domingo. Earlier this year, Pirozzi made her highly praised debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Leonora in *Il Trovatore*. She is scheduled to perform the title role of *Adriana Lecouvreur* in Naples, Abigail in Monte Carlo and Stuttgart, and Maddalena in Bilbao later this season. Over the course of her career, Pirozzi has worked with many of the world's renowned conductors, including Nicola Luisotti, Nello Santi, Daniel Oren, Donato Renzetti, Gianandrea Noseda, Michele Mariotti, and Renato Palumbo.



GEORGE GAGNIDZE

(Tbilisi, Georgia)

Carlo Gérard

Baritone George Gagnidze makes his San Francisco Opera and role debuts as Carlo Gérard in *Andrea Chénier*.

Trained at the State Conservatory in his native Georgia, Gagnidze debuted as

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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 in *Aida* and to the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Scarpia and Carlo Gérard. He will return to San Francisco Opera in November as Amonasro in a new production of *Aida*.



J'NAI BRIDGES
(Lakewood, Washington)

Bersi
Making her San Francisco Opera and role debuts as Bersi in *Andrea Chénier*, American

mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges recently completed a three-year residency with the distinguished Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Highlights of her tenure there included Ines in *Il Trovatore*, Vlasta in Mieczysław Weinberg's *The Passenger*, Flora in *La Traviata*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Carmen in the world premiere of *Bel Canto*, an opera by Jimmy Lopez, based on the novel by Ann Patchett. Bridges has also recently performed Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* with San Diego Opera, the mezzo-soprano solo in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra, and Ravel's *Shéhérezade* with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the NDR Symphony Orchestra in Hamburg. Upcoming engagements this season include Bersi at Bavarian State Opera, Nefertiti in *Akhmaten* at Los Angeles Opera, and Sister Helen Prejean in *Dead Man Walking* at Vancouver Opera.

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JOEL SORENSEN

(Canton, Ohio)

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A frequent performer at San Francisco Opera, American tenor Joel Sorensen made his Company

debut in 2004 as The Mosquito in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and most recently appeared last fall as Balthasar Zorn in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and as Le Médecin in *La Chute de la Maison Usher*. During his long association with New York City Opera, he performed in more than two dozen productions, including *Prince Igor*, *Falstaff*, and *Mathis der Maler*. Other career highlights include Spoletta in *Tosca*, Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*, Valzacchi in *Der Rosenkavalier*, and Andrés, Cochenille, Pitichinaccio, and Frantz in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Metropolitan Opera; Spoletta, Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette*, Beppe in *Pagliacci*, Pang in *Turandot*, and Curley in *Of Mice and Men* at San Diego Opera; Spoletta, Caius in *Falstaff*, Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Wilhelm in *The Ghosts of Versailles* at LA Opera; Herod in *Salome* at Florentine Opera; and Andres in *Wozzeck* with Salzburg's Landestheater. Later this season Sorensen will appear as Vitek in San Francisco Opera's *The Makropulos Case*, Caius at San Diego Opera, and Spoletta at Canadian Opera Company.



ROBERT POMAKOV

(Toronto, Canada)

Mathieu

Canadian bass Robert Pomakov made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2012 as Monterone in *Rigoletto*. Highlights

of last season included his return to the Metropolitan Opera as Monterone and Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, as well as his company and role debuts with Lyric Opera of Kansas City as Vodnick in *Rusalka* and with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis as Banquo in *Macbeth*. A frequent performer at the Metropolitan Opera, he has appeared in the company's productions of *Andrea Chénier*, *Manon*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Carlo*, and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. On the concert stage, he has appeared as a soloist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Ravinia Festival,

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Edinburgh Festival, and Pacific Symphony, among others. Pomakov has been a prize winner in several of the world's premier singing competitions: a finalist in the Queen Elizabeth Competition in Belgium, second place at the Belvedere Competition in Vienna, and third place at the Operalia Competition. This season he appears as Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* at Frankfurt Opera, Monterone at Opéra National de Paris, and Alberich (a role debut) in Canadian Opera Company's *Götterdämmerung*.



DAVID PERSHALL
(Temple, Texas)
Roucher

American baritone David Pershall makes his San Francisco Opera debut this season as Roucher in *Andrea Chénier*.

A graduate of 2008's Merola Opera Program and the Virginia Opera Resident Artist program, he has recently appeared at the Vienna State Opera as Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, and Sebastian in *The Tempest*. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut last season as Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and also appeared there in the roles of Schaunard in *La Bohème* and Lord Cecil in *Maria Stuarda*. Pershall has partnered with the Beethoven Easter Festival and the Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra with whom he participated in three live performance albums featuring his performances as Don Pedro in *Maria Padilla*, Manfredo in *L'Amore dei Tre Re*, and Orestes in *Iphigénie en Tauride*. He has won many prestigious vocal competitions, most recently the top prize in the annual George London Competition. Later this season, he is scheduled to appear as Count Almaviva in Boston Lyric Opera's *Le Nozze di Figaro*.



JILL GROVE
(San Antonio, Texas)
Madelon

Last summer, mezzo-soprano Jill Grove performed the role of Grandmother Buryjovka in San Francisco Opera's

Jenůfa. In addition, she made returns to Houston Grand Opera as Ježibaba in *Rusalka*, the Lyric Opera of Chicago

as Margret in *Wozzeck*, and Pittsburgh Opera as Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress*. Other recent appearances include Klytaemnestra in *Elektra* at Michigan Opera Theatre and Ježibaba at New Orleans Opera. Grove is a frequent guest at the Lyric Opera of Chicago where she has also sung the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Die Amme in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Amneris in *Aida*, Erda in *Götterdämmerung*, and Countess Geschwitz in *Lulu*. At the Metropolitan Opera, her performances include Erda in *Götterdämmerung* and *Das Rheingold*, Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Madelon in *Andrea Chénier*, Pantalís in *Mefistofele*, Emilia in *Otello*, and Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare*. A sought-after concert soloist, Grove has performed with the San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, National Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Utah Symphony, and Houston Symphony. Later this season she appears as Filipjevna in the Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of *Eugene Onegin*.



CATHERINE COOK
(Villa Park, Illinois)
Contessa di Coigny

Celebrating her 25th season with San Francisco Opera, mezzo-soprano Catherine Cook has appeared with San

Francisco Opera in more than 50 roles in over 300 performances. World premiere credits include the title role in Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*, Jade Boucher in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, and Arlene Kamen and Wang Tai-Tai in Stewart Wallace's *The Bonesetter's Daughter*. Also for the Company, she has played Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, Mother Goose in *The Rake's Progress*, Annina in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Flora in *La Traviata*, Mrs. McLean in *Susannah*, Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, among other roles. Cook has sung with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera and she has appeared at Los Angeles Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, and Portland Opera as well as with the San Francisco Symphony. A winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Cook is a graduate of the Merola Opera Program and a former

Adler Fellow. She holds the Frederica von Stade Distinguished Chair in Voice at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.



EDWARD NELSON
(Santa Clarita, California)
Fléville

A second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow, baritone Edward Nelson is a graduate of the 2014

Merola Opera Program where he sang the title role of *Don Giovanni*. For San Francisco Opera, he created the role of John Buckley in the 2015 world premiere of Marco Tutino's *Two Women*, and he appeared during the 2015–16 Season as the Second Priest in *The Magic Flute*, Hermann Ortel in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Fiorello in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, L'Ami in Debussy's *La Chute de la Maison Usher*, and Moralès in *Carmen*. Other recent engagements include the Ferryman in Britten's *Curlew River* with the Mark Morris Dance Group/Tanglewood Music Festival and Montreal's Ballet-Opéra-Pantomime, as well as the title role of Britten's *Owen Wingrave*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, and Le Podestat in Bizet's *Le Docteur Miracle* with the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music where he holds undergraduate and graduate degrees. Also this season at San Francisco Opera, Nelson appears as Eunuch/Stone in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, and Prince Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly*.



ALEX BOYER
(New York, New York)
The Abbé

Tenor Alex Boyer made his San Francisco Opera debut as El Remendado in last

summer's *Carmen*. He has most recently performed the roles of Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Manrico in *Il Trovatore* with Island City Opera; Marcello in Leoncavallo's *La Bohème* and Alwa in *Lulu* with West Edge Opera; Lt. B.F. Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* with Livermore Valley Opera; and Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* with Opera Idaho. During his residency at Opera San Jose from 2008 through 2013, Boyer

performed the roles of Nadir in *The Pearl Fishers*, Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, Manrico, and Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*. He also participated in the Merola Opera Program in 2007 and Santa Fe Opera's Apprenticeship Program for Singers.



BRAD WALKER
(Lake Zurich, Illinois)
Dumas

American bass-baritone Brad Walker is a first-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and graduate of the

2015 Merola Opera Program. Prior to making his San Francisco Opera debut last summer as Zuniga in *Carmen*, he appeared in the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, and Colline in *La Bohème* with Yale Opera where he received an Artist Diploma from the Yale School of Music. While earning a Master of Music degree from the University of Kansas, he appeared as Mr. Peachum in *The Beggar's Opera*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, and Orgon in *Tartuffe*. He has been an apprentice with Des Moines Metro Opera, Chautauqua Opera Company, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and received an award in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. He also appears this season as the Stage Hand in the Company's *The Makropulos Case*.



MATTHEW STUMP
(Goshen, Indiana)
Fouquier-Tinville

Bass-baritone Matthew Stump is a second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and graduate of the

2014 Merola Opera Program, where he appeared as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. He made his Company debut as a Trojan Soldier and Sentry in *Les Troyens* in summer 2015, and he appeared during the 2015–16 Season as Hans Foltz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, the Monk in *Don Carlo*, and the Foreman in *Jenůfa*. He has performed the title role of *Sweeney Todd*, the Prime Minister in *Cendrillon*, the Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Capulet in *Roméo et Juliette* at the University of North Texas, as well as the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, and Frank



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in *Street Scene* at Luther College, where he holds a bachelor's degree. He holds awards from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and Dallas Opera Guild.



ANTHONY REED
(Alexandria, Minnesota)

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

Troyens, and he appeared last season as The Speaker and Second Armored Man in *The Magic Flute*, Hans Schwartz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Doctor Primus in *Getty's Usher House*, and the Mayor in *Jenůfa*. He is a second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and alumnus of the 2014 Merola Opera Program. 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*, among others. Reed received a 2011 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Regional Encouragement Award and has been a young artist at the Wolf Trap Opera Studio and the Seagle Music Colony, in addition to his studies at the Curtis Institute of Music and the University of Wisconsin.

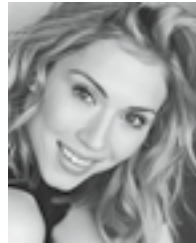


ANDERS FRÖHLICH
(Kent, Connecticut)

Major-Domo
Baritone Anders Fröhlich is a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus and has appeared as a soloist

with the Company in 2008's *Ariodante* as Polinesso's squire and as the Spanish Sailor in 2012's *Moby-Dick*. In addition, he has performed with Opera San Jose, Opera Parallèle, and West Edge Opera. He began his formal training at the Connecticut Conservatory for the Arts where he studied music, acting, and ballet. After spending two years as a ballet major at Indiana University, Bloomington, Fröhlich trained at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts

in Los Angeles, where he began his professional career with the Los Angeles Opera as a comprimario cover. Recent engagements include the role of Second Guard in Opera Parallèle's production of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* and as Augusto in Ars Minerva's production of Daniele da Castrovillari's *La Cleopatra*.



LAURA ALEXICH
(Santa Barbara, California)

Shepherdess
Dancer Laura Alexich recently appeared in San Francisco Opera's productions of *Die Meistersinger*

von Nürnberg and *Les Troyens*. Trained in classical and contemporary ballet, she has performed leading roles in *Dracula*, *Serenade*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Cinderella*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Nutcracker*. From 2007 to 2009 she danced in the *Glory of Christmas* and *Glory of Easter* pageants at the Crystal Cathedral in Orange County. Her most recent projects include commercials for Microsoft, Subaru, and Audi, as well as the 2014 Taylor Swift music video *Shake It Off*. Alexich is also an instructor of ballet.



MICHAEL LEVINE
(Grass Valley, California)

Shepherd
Dancer Michael Levine first appeared with San Francisco Opera in the 2009 production of *Il*

Trovatore. He has since been seen in numerous productions, including *Heart of a Soldier*, *Nixon in China*, *Moby-Dick*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Show Boat*, and *Sweeney Todd*. Levine began his professional career with the Joffrey Ballet in New York before joining American Ballet Theatre. He later rejoined the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago where he eventually became a principal dancer. He has performed numerous leading roles, including Romeo in John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*, The Lover in Antony Tudor's *Lilac Garden*, Death in Kurt Jooss's *The Green Table*, and Albrecht in Freddy Franklin's staging of *Giselle*.

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DAVID MCVICAR
(Glasgow, Scotland)
Director
David McVicar made his San Francisco Opera production debut in 2007 with *Don Giovanni*. His

production of *Il Trovatore* was seen here in 2009, followed by *Les Troyens* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in 2015. Career highlights include *Macbeth* at the Kirov (Mariinsky) Opera, Washington National Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; *Salome* at Covent Garden; *Il Trovatore* at the Met and Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Billy Budd* and *Giulio Cesare* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and *Semele* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées; *Alcina* and *Manon* with Houston Grand Opera, the Dallas Opera, and English National Opera; and *Agrippina* at English National Opera, Frankfurt Opera, the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. His work has been seen frequently at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where his credits include televised productions of *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Faust*, *Die Zauberflöte*, and *Rigoletto*. Other productions include *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, and *Giulio Cesare* for the Glyndebourne Festival; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for the Salzburg Festival; *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Don Giovanni*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Hamlet*, and *Il Re Pastore* for Opera North (U.K.); *Tosca*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *The Rape of Lucretia* for English National Opera; *The Turn of the Screw* for the Mariinsky Theatre and English National Opera; and *Tamerlano* for Deutsche Oper Berlin. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2012.



ROBERT JONES
(London, England)
Set Designer
Making his San Francisco Opera debut, English designer Robert Jones had his Royal Opera House,

Covent Garden debut in 2015 with this same production of *Andrea Chénier*. He regularly collaborates with director David McVicar in opera with credits including *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*

(Paris and Berlin), *Don Carlo* (Frankfurt), *Giulio Cesare* (Glyndebourne Festival; Chicago; Metropolitan Opera), *Tristan und Isolde* (Tokyo and Vienna), *Don Giovanni* (Opera Australia), and *Anna Bolena* (Metropolitan Opera). His other opera designs include *Die Fledermaus* (Metropolitan Opera), *Werther* (La Coruña), *The Elixir of Love* (English National Opera), and *Manon Lescaut* (Gothenburg). He has designed more than fifteen productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company, as well as productions for the National Theatre. His West End credits include *Fatal Attraction*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *The Secret Rapture*, *Benefactors*, *Calendar Girls*, and *Jolson*.



JENNY TIRAMANI
(London, England)
Costume Designer
Making her San Francisco Opera debut, costume designer Jenny Tiramani had her Royal Opera House,

Covent Garden debut in 2015 with this same production of *Andrea Chénier*. She regularly collaborates with director David McVicar, credits including *La Clemenza di Tito* (Aix-en-Provence Festival), *Orlando* (Lille, Paris, and Dijon), *Anna Bolena* (Metropolitan Opera), and *The Marriage of Figaro* (Opera Australia). She was director of theater design at Shakespeare's Globe from 1997 through 2005, where the many productions she worked on included *Twelfth Night*, winner of the 2014 Tony Award for Best Costume Design. As a member of Renaissance Theatre Company from 1988, she designed West End Shakespeare productions directed by Judi Dench, Geraldine McEwan, Derek Jacobi, and Kenneth Branagh. Tiramani is a leading researcher in historical costume practices and is founder member and principal of The School of Historical Dress in London. She is also a writer and co-authored the books *Patterns of Fashion* and *Seventeenth-Century Women's Dress Patterns: Books One and Two*. Tiramani widely lectures on the history of costume and costume design.



ADAM SILVERMAN
(Chicago, Illinois)
Lighting Designer
Adam Silverman was lighting designer for San Francisco Opera's productions of *Tannhäuser* in 2007 and *Partenope* in

2014. In addition, his work has appeared at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (*The Last Hotel*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*); the Metropolitan Opera (*Un Ballo in Maschera*); English National Opera (*Jenůfa*, *Norma*, *Powder Her Face*, *Peter Grimes*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Julius Caesar*); Deutsche Oper Berlin (*Billy Budd*, *Peter Grimes*, *Aida*); Bavarian State Opera (*Pique Dame*); the Bregenz Festival (*Prelude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, *Jeux*, and *La Chute de la Maison Usher*); and Hamburg Opera (*Battaglia di Legnano*, *I Due Foscari*, *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata*), among other opera companies. Silverman has also designed lighting for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Long Beach Opera, Royal Ballet, Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre, Toneelgroep Amsterdam, Royal National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, London's West End and Broadway.



ANDREW GEORGE
(Tonyrefail, Wales)
Choreographer
Andrew George had his San Francisco Opera debut last season with *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. George

trained at London's Laban Centre. His repertoire in prestigious theaters internationally encompasses Baroque works (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in Paris, Strasbourg, Berlin, Brussels, and Copenhagen; *Giulio Cesare* at Glyndebourne, the Metropolitan Opera, and Opera de Lille); *Don Giovanni* and *Anna Bolena* at the Metropolitan Opera; *Il Trovatore* at LA Opera; the *Ring* cycle at Strasbourg's Opera National du Rhin; *Les Troyens* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Handmaid's Tale* at English National Opera; and *A Little Night Music* at Paris's Châtelet. His work has also been seen with the major companies of Amsterdam, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and St. Petersburg, as well as the Salzburg Festival, Aix-en-

Provence Festival, and Innsbruck Early Music Festival. Recent engagements include *Wozzeck* at Lyric Opera of Chicago.



COLM SEERY
(Dublin, Ireland)
**Revival
Choreographer**
Colm Seery made his San Francisco Opera debut last season with *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. He

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



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 choreographed more than fifty ballets, thirty musicals, and numerous self-produced evenings of music and dance around the world.



DAVE MAIER
(Great Neck, New York)

Fight Choreographer
Resident fight director for San Francisco Opera, 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 also appears in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Aida*, and *Madama Butterfly*.

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Librarian/Assistant Orchestra

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Cheryl Mennen, Cutter
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Manuel Gutierrez, Production Coordinator
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Jersey McDermott, Senior Craft Artisan
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Liza Ryus, Assistant Dyer
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Eric Furbish, Assistant Lighting Designer
Thorn Michaels, **Gilbert V. Hemsley, Jr.**, Lighting Intern
Paul Timmel, Lighting Intern

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Freddy Wielandt, Assistant Master of Properties

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Lawrence Pech, Dance Master
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Lisa Anderson, **Sarah Bingel**, **Gina Hays**, **Andrew G. Landis**, **Jimmy Marcheso**, **Jayme O'Hara**, **Thea Railey**, **Lisa-Marie Shuster**, Assistant Stage Managers

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Elisa Mack, Second Assistant
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Dr. Myron Marx, Company Medical Adviser
Seyfarth Shaw LLP, Counsel
Armanino LLP, Independent Public Accountants
Asero Insurance Services, Insurance Brokers
Cory Weaver, Official Photographer
Yamaha is the Official Piano of San Francisco Opera
Pianos supplied by Piedmont Piano



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
Associate 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



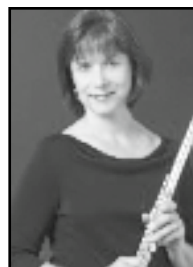
Steven D'Amico
Assistant Principal
Bass



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



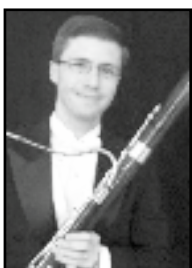
Joanne Burke Eisler
Assistant Principal
Clarinet



Anthony Striplen
Clarinet &
Bass Clarinet



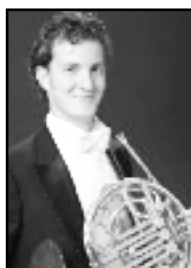
Rufus Olivier
Principal
Bassoon



Daniel MacNeill
Bassoon



Michael Severance
Bassoon &
Contrabassoon



Kevin Rivard
Co-Principal
Horn



Keith Green
Horn



Brian McCarty
Horn



Lawrence Ragent
Horn



Adam Luftman
Principal
Trumpet



William Holmes
Trumpet



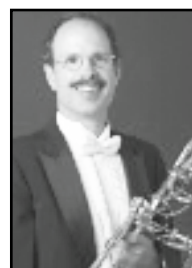
John Pearson
Trumpet



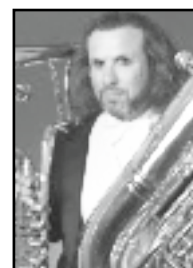
Samuel Schlosser
Principal Trombone



Donald Kennelly
Trombone



David Ridge
Trombone &
Bass Trombone



Zachariah Spellman
Tuba/Cimbasso



John Burgardt
Timpani



Richard Kvistad
Principal Percussion &
Associate Timpani



Patricia Niemi
Percussion



Olga Ortenberg
Rakitchenkov
Harp



Tracy Davis
Orchestra Manager



Carrie Weick
Librarian



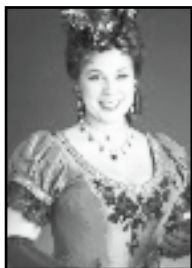
Timothy Spears
Assistant Orchestra
Manager & Librarian

Most photos by John Martin. Not pictured: Lev Rankov, *First Violin*; Mark Almond, *Co-Principal Horn*; Scott Macomber, *Second Trumpet, Regular Substitute*

REGULAR CHORUS



Kathleen Bayler
Soprano



Sara Colburn
Soprano



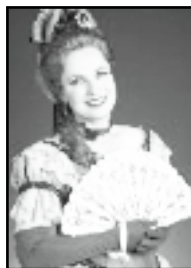
Dvora Djoraev
Soprano



Mary Finch
Soprano



Claire Kelm
Soprano



Elisabeth Rom Lucio
Soprano



Angela Eden Moser
Soprano



Rachelle Perry
Soprano



Virginia Pluth
Soprano



Carole Schaffer
Soprano



Mitzie Kay Weiner
Soprano



Buffy Baggott
Mezzo-Soprano



Roberta Bowman
Mezzo-Soprano



Janet Campbell
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Mouzon
Mezzo-Soprano



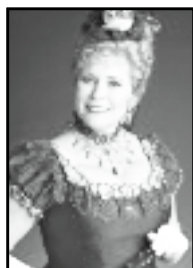
Sally Munro
Mezzo-Soprano



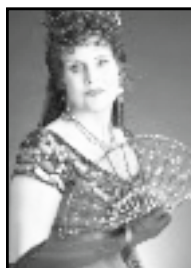
Erin Neff
Mezzo-Soprano



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



Chester Pidduck
Tenor



Colby Roberts
Tenor



Sigmund Seigel
Tenor



Dan Stanley
Tenor



Alexander Taite
Tenor



Andrew Truett
Tenor



Richard Walker
Tenor

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA REGULAR CHORUS CONTINUED



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



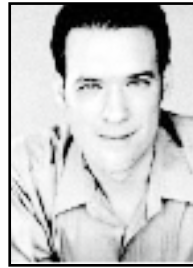
Jere Torkelsen
Baritone



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



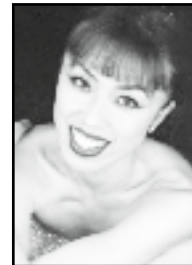
Bryan Ketron



Michael Levine



Rachel Speidel Little



Chiharu Shibata

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 Julie Adams † ♫
 Julius Ahn
 Alex Boyer ♫
 J’Nai Bridges*
 Lawrence Brownlee*
 Arturo Chacón-Cruz
 Scott Conner
 Catherine Cook † ♫
 Leah Crocetto † ♫
 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
 Scott Quinn ♫
 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*
 Qiulin Zhang**

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 Nicola Luisotti
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 Mikhail Tatarnikov*

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 Laurent Pelly
 Jacopo Spirei*
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 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
 Robert Jones*
 Chantal Thomas
 Michael Yeorgan

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 Laurent Pelly
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 Anita Yavich

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 Adam Silverman

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Tommi Brem*

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 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
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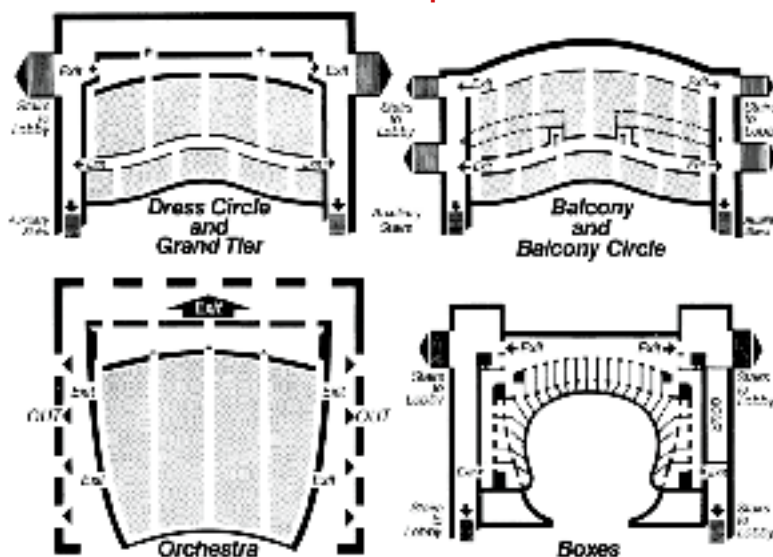
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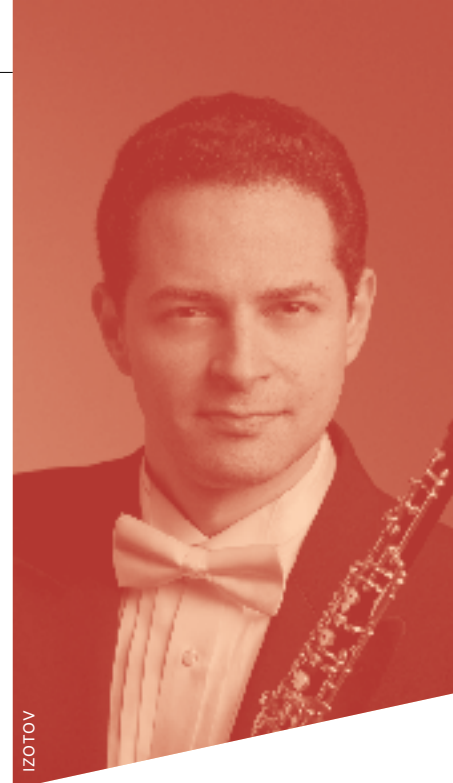
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