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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

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THE BOARD OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Welcome back to the War Memorial Opera House.

This summer we present some of the most cherished works in the operatic repertoire: Verdi's Rigoletto, led by Company Music Director Nicola Luisotti; Mozart's Don Giovanni, with a stellar cast of international singers including Italian bass-baritone Ildebrando D'Arcangelo in the title role; and Puccini's La Bohème, a showcase for some of today's



most promising vocal talent. Whether you're seeing these operas for the first time or revisiting them as old friends, you'll be swept away by the artistry onstage and these works' tremendous emotional power.

This summer we also celebrate a remarkable anniversary. The Merola Opera Program, which started 60 years ago, has changed the face of opera training in this country and played a crucial role in the careers of generations of opera singers, coaches, and stage directors in the United States and abroad. The roster of artists who have participated in the program is remarkable: Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, Thomas Hampson, Sylvia McNair, Anna Netrebko, Nadine Sierra, Patrick Summers, Rolando Villazón, and Deborah Voigt, just to name a few. We are enormously proud of the impact that Merola has had on the opera world—and of its synergetic relationship with San Francisco Opera. Please join us on Sunday, June 11 for a 60th anniversary concert that will include performances by distinguished Merola alumni.

Once again, we thank our Company sponsors who, along with our devoted orchestra, chorus, dancers, crew, and administration, make world-class opera in San Francisco possible: the Dolby Family, Ann & Gordon Getty, Mr. and Mrs. Franklin P. Johnson, Jr., the Edmund W. & Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, Steven M. Menzies, Bernard & Barbro Osher, Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem, Dianne & Tad Taube, Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment Funds, and Diane B. Wilsey.

The support of patrons and donors is critical to San Francisco Opera, as ticket sales cover only about 30 percent of the Company's budget. We recently received an extraordinarily generous challenge grant from longtime friends Ann and Gordon Getty, who have offered to match all new and increased gifts to San Francisco Opera through the end of our fiscal year on July 31 dollar for dollar, up to a total of \$1.5 million. Please help us earn this challenge grant by becoming a donor to San Francisco Opera or, if you are already a donor, increasing your gift this year. Your generosity will support a memorable summer season, extend our reach to new audiences, and provide the transformative power of great opera to our community. Visit sfopera.com/springchallenge to learn more or make your gift today.

Thank you again for joining us.

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA Summer 2017

Luisotti to Be Honored at Opera Ball



San Francisco Opera Music Director Nicola Luisotti and his wife, Rita Simonini, have been named guests of honor for Opera Ball 2017 at the Imperial Palace, a lavish celebration marking the opening of the Company's 95th season on September 8. "This will certainly be a very emotional year for me," said Luisotti who after nine years steps down as music director at the end of the 2017-18 Season. "I am

very proud of the work we have accomplished during my time with San Francisco Opera. To be acknowledged by the Opera Guild at so prestigious an affair as Opera Ball is a great and touching honor."

Produced by San Francisco Opera Guild and led by Co-Chairs Courtney Labe and Maryam Muduroglu, this year's Opera Ball coincides with the season-opening performance of Giacomo Puccini's Turandot and includes a cocktail reception, dinner by Executive Chef Josip Martinovic of McCalls Catering and Events, and a post-performance celebration with dancing in a tented pavilion in the War Memorial Courtyard. Designer J. Riccardo Benavides will recreate for the 750 guests an opulence fit for the Chinese emperor himself. All proceeds benefit the Opera Association and Opera Guild's education programs. For tickets, please visit sfoperacom/operaball2017.

Opera at the Ballpark 2017

On Friday, June 30 at 7:30 p.m., join 30,000 fans for a free and unforgettable night of Opera at the Ballpark. For the fifteenth live simulcast in the Company's history, San Francisco Opera partners



with the San Francisco Giants to transmit Mozart's Don Giovanni from the stage of the War Memorial Opera House to AT&T Park's 103-foot-wide HD screen.

This summer tradition of fun, garlic fries, and opera under the stars includes Beach Blanket Babylon's Tammy Nelson leading the crowd in "Take Me Out to the Opera." The live simulcast will feature English subtitles and last approximately three and a half hours. Online registration, which assures early entrance into the ballpark for preferred seating and entry into a special prize drawing for free Turandot tickets, is available at sfopera.com/simulcast.

The simulcast of Don Giovanni is sponsored by Taube Philanthropies. Opera at the Ballpark is supported by Gold Sponsors Chevron, United Airlines, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc., and PG&E. San Francisco Opera simulcasts are made possible through the pioneering technology of the Company's Koret/Taube Media Suite.



Charlot D. Malin 1968-2017

In March, friends of San Francisco Opera received the unexpected and tragic news of the passing of Charlot Malin. A former Opera Ball co-chair and San Francisco Opera Guild president from 2014 to 2016, Charlot left an indelible mark on the Company and the philanthropic life of San Francisco. "She was an incredible champion of our Guild Education programs, striving to bring opera to the youth of today," said Guild President Jane Mudge.

Born and raised in Norway, Charlot became a successful Bay Area real estate executive and interior designer. With her husband, Greg, she ran Troon Pacific Inc., which specializes in environmentallysustainable design in residential and commercial properties. In addition, she nurtured an early love for the arts, having attended her first opera in Oslo at age 7, where her father's aunt and cousin sang in Aida.

Charlot is survived by her husband and twin sons, Benjamin and Sebastian. In her memory, the Opera Guild has established the Charlot D. Malin San Francisco Opera Guild Education Fund, which will support opera and classical music education programs for Bay Area students and teachers. For more information or to make a donation, please visit sfopera.com/charlotmalinfund.



Notes from the General Director

Unveiling Our Own California Story

When I arrived in San Francisco in 2005 my now-wife Kate gave me a copy of Herbert Asbury's book *The Barbary Coast*, a fascinating introduction to the chaotic, opportunistic frenzy that characterized the early years of this iconic city. For someone growing up in the U.K., in which history stretches back across millennia, I was fascinated by the idea that here you could just look over your shoulder and be connected to events, places, and people that literally shaped the formation of a city and state. That fascination was fueled by trips up to Truckee to visit the site of the Donner Party's camp and that disastrous journey of 1846. The frontier history of California is only generations' old and its energy and impact still seethes through this part of the world. It is a pioneering spirit that continues to put this region at the forefront of life-changing technological advances.

This November we unveil a magnificent new opera that will connect us to that immediacy of local history. John Adams' Girls of the Golden West (no connection to Puccini's opera!) takes us into the multifaceted world of gold-mining camps in the early 1850s at the time California was moving from Mexican to American rule. The story is real and firsthand, told by Louise Clappe, the wife of a doctor who spent eighteen months in the communities of Downieville and Rich Bar, high in the Sierra 200 miles northeast of here. Ms. Clappe sent a series of exquisitely detailed letters back to her sister in Massachusetts, writing under the pen name "Dame Shirley." She left us some of the most evocative depictions of life at that time in all its glory, grit, and strain. Peter Sellars, whose relationship with John Adams is one of the towering creative partnerships of the last 50 years, has assembled a libretto using the words of Dame Shirley, enriched with texts from Mark Twain, Frederick Douglass, and some deliciously honest miners' ballads. Through these lenses we are transported into a very authentic portrayal of the Gold Rush in which the urgency for quick wealth collides with racial tensions and the rapid subjugation of the non-white communities. This will be an opera tackling themes that are as present now as they were in 1850. This is an opera of our history and our place, but also our time.

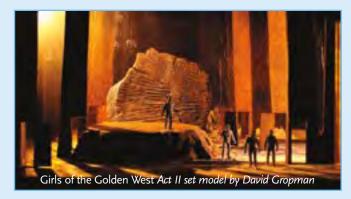
This year marks John Adams' 70th birthday, and Girls of the Golden West will crown the global celebrations of one of the

most important composers of our time. John is a longtime resident of the Bay Area and we are honored that this premiere will be in San Francisco. The eyes of the musical world will be on us this November, and John's opera promises to be a great marker in the storied history of the Company. As we have seen in each of John's works presented here—Doctor Atomic, The Death of Klinghoffer, and Nixon in China— he finds a dynamic, engaging, and masterful musical language that fits the aesthetic and drama inherent in each piece. Girls of the Golden West will be one of his most propulsive and thrilling scores. I do hope you'll join us for this incredibly important moment.

As we move through the summer, John is putting the finishing touches to the score, our scene shop in Burlingame is building what will be an extraordinary visual world, the costume shop is creating authentic period clothes, and out young, diverse, and engaging cast is preparing for preliminary rehearsals in August. They are depicting a world which, no matter how exhausting, challenging, or tense it may have been, always remained for Dame Shirley a world of majestic beauty.

Deep in the shadowy nooks of the far-down valleys, like wasted jewels dropped from the radiant sky above, lay half a dozen blue-blossomed lagoons, glittering and gleaming and sparkling in the sunlight as though each tiny wavelet were formed of rifted diamonds. —The Shirley Letters







Three's Family

In a remarkable coincidence of casting, this summer's production of *Rigoletto* features three family members sharing the stage. Tenor and second-year Adler Fellow **Pene Pati**, who debuts the role of the licentious Duke of Mantua, is performing alongside his wife, soprano and second-year Adler Fellow **Amina Edris** (Countess Ceprano), and his brother, first-year Adler Fellow and tenor **Amitai Pati** (Matteo Borsa). Although this is the first time that the three will sing together at the War Memorial Opera House, they have a long record of collaboration. For instance, in their native New Zealand, Pene and Amitai perform in the popular singing group Sol₃ Mio.

Stay tuned to **sfopera.com** this summer as the Company's Media Department documents their work with interviews and performance footage.

Attila and Mefistofele on KQED TV

San Francisco Opera and KQED TV continue a longstanding partnership with high-definition broadcasts of two of the Company's most spectacular recent productions: Verdi's *Attila*, a gripping portrayal of a warrior tormented by internal doubts, and *Mefistofele*, Boito's magnificent retelling of Goethe's *Faust*.

Hosted by mezzo-soprano Frederica "Flicka" von Stade and General Director Matthew Shilvock, the operas will air on KQED 9 in the original Italian with English subtitles and feature Music Director Nicola Luisotti leading the San Francisco Opera Chorus and Orchestra. For *Attila*, mark your calendars for Thursday, August 3 and for *Mefistofele*, Thursday, August 24. Both broadcasts start at 9 p.m.

Support for opera on KQED is provided by a generous gift from Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem.



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SAN FRANCISCO **OPERA** Profile **Dr. Myron Marx**Company Medical Advisor



Myron Marx's medical training as a radiologist and his love for opera intersected unexpectedly one night in 1987 at the War Memorial Opera House. A singer had fainted onstage, and Marx, who was in the audience, left his seat to see if he could be of assistance. He was ushered into a dressing room where he examined the patient and recommended the crew lower the singer's head and raise his feet. The singer revived. "He made his curtain call 20 minutes later," Marx recounts.

Two weeks later, Marx was in the audience when a soprano twisted her ankle during a performance and limped about in obvious pain through the remainder of the scene. He again rushed to the stage door to offer his help. Then-General Director Terence McEwen and Artistic Administrator Sarah Billinghurst appreciated Marx's assistance during each incident and asked if the native New Yorker would volunteer to be the Company's on-site doctor during performances. It was the beginning of what he calls the Performance Program, a cadre of medical professionals who attend the opera and are available when needed. "I arrange to have a doctor in the house at each performance in the same rear orchestra seats on the aisle," he says. "We have a silent beeper and a fairly well-equipped medical bag backstage. If we are needed during a performance, we are called."

Many of the calls are mundane: colds, fatigue, aches, or sprains. "Every call is different. There have been real emergencies where singers don't feel they can continue. In situations like that, we work closely with the opera staff and the conductor to make a decision." Marx recalled one singer who wrenched his back so severely during a scene that a cancellation seemed unavoidable.

"We had a massage therapist on site within 15 minutes. Luckily it was a long opera and the artist was able to receive treatment before going back on," he says. "He finished the opera, and he was magnificent!"

In many situations, Dr. Marx provides comfort just by being present and attentive. "At the end of *La Traviata*, Dr. Grenvil goes in and just takes Violetta's pulse. It is intensely reassuring, even if it doesn't save her." Bedside manner is as essential in his work as anything in his medical bag. "The pressure riding on these artists is quite high. They have a difficult job, and they want to be in top form.

"We are not here for the audience because the War Memorial is a city facility and there is an EMT on duty for patrons, but the EMT knows we are here and occasionally we are called *in extremis* until 911 arrives."

When Marx and his team began working at performances, there was a doctor, Ernie Rosenbaum, who assisted artists and their families while they were in town for rehearsals. Marx eventually assumed those duties as well. "If I can't handle a problem by phone or giving a prescription, I know a lot of physicians in town, and I can get the artists seen tomorrow if necessary." Each fall, he also administers flu vaccinations to the entire Company.

Marx makes the schedule of who presides over which night. (Look for him on Saturday nights.) "All of this is volunteer," he notes. "All of the doctors are dedicated and love the art form. I feel it's an enormous honor to have a foot in the door because it is important to me to not just be a fan, but a part of the process and to help where I can."

— JEFFERY MCMILLAN

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA EWS

Director of Marketing Marcia Lazer Retires

Capping a four-decade-long career in arts management and an 11-year tenure as San Francisco Opera's Director of Marketing Marcia Lazer will retire from the Company at the end of July.

"Lazer and her team have led us to blockbuster sales for productions as varied as *Porgy and Bess, Les Troyens, Show Boat,* the world premieres of *The Bonesetter's Daughter* and *Dream of the Red Chamber,* and most notably the *Ring,*" said Managing Director of Philanthropy and Audiences Jennifer Lynch.

Lazer has also introduced tens of thousands of people to opera through the successful promotion of simulcasts and other major outreach campaigns. "No one could be more dedicated to and passionate about the art form and the Company than Marcia. To say we will miss her incredible knowledge, generosity as a colleague and friend is an enormous understatement," said Lynch.

Lazer's extensive professional experience includes senior positions with the

Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera, South Coast Repertory, and Center Theatre Group. She holds a master's degree in musicology from Yale University and a bachelor's degree in music history from Wellesley College.

"I can't say how much my time at San Francisco Opera has meant to me and how much I will miss being of this great company," said Lazer. "It's been a great pleasure and honor. And I look forward to being part of the audience for many years to come."





Call for Archives

Do you have a photo of Lily Pons singing Gilda in one of our productions of *Rigoletto*? Or old programs from the 1970s? The San Francisco Opera Archives is looking for photographs, particularly from our early years at the Civic Auditorium (1923–1931), and select programs to add to our growing collections. If you are interested in making a donation, please send an email to Director of Archives Barbara Rominski at brominski@sfopera.com or call (415) 551-6387.

And be sure to check out the Company's online Performance Archive, archive.sfopera.com, where you will find hundreds of newly released images dating from the 1920s through 1969.



Celebrating Years of Merola

The program for young opera artists has changed the face of opera training



nyone who's spent time around the Merola Opera Program has a story to tell. Many of them shine with happy, promise-filled endings.

Sheri Greenawald, who has led the San Francisco Opera Center's singular and widely esteemed summer training program for emerging singers since 2002, is fond of one account set at a 2015 master class taught by bass-baritone James Morris. After listening to Kihun Yoon soar through Wotan's Farewell in *Die Walküre*, Greenawald recalled, Morris paused before delivering his pithy remark: "I'm glad you weren't around when I was coming up in the profession!"

Former San Francisco Opera General Director David Gockley had a vivid Merola moment at the 2008 Grand Finale, a showcase concert of arias and ensembles that brings the program to a glittering end in August. Knocked out by soprano Leah Crocetto's account of "Tu puniscimi, o Signore" from Verdi's Luisa Miller, Gockley turned to a companion and vowed to mount a main stage San Francisco

Opera revival of the piece with Crocetto in the title role. And so he did, presenting it as the 2015 season opener.

In a life-imitates-art romance, tenor Alek Shrader fell for his wife-to-be, mezzo-soprano Daniela Mack, when they were both cast in a 2007 Merola pro-

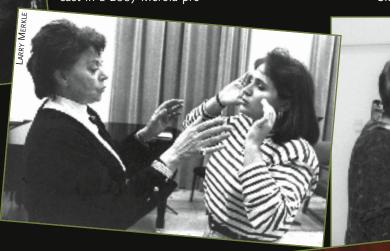
duction of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. "It was indeed my best summer ever," said Shrader of that charmed musical match.

Not every Merola memory is all sweetness and light. The program, which is marking its 60th anniversary this year, is so rigorous and demanding it's routinely compared to boot camp. Soprano Elza van den Heever (Merola 2003 and '04) remembers sitting in an Opera House stairwell weeping, the arms of fellow "Merolini" Joseph Kaiser wrapped around her in a consoling bear hug. "Maybe I was a girl who had a lot of potential, but I didn't know what I was doing," she recalled. Persuaded by coach Dolora Zajick (Merola 1983) that she was in fact a soprano rather than a mezzo, van den Heever had to "re-teach my little feet how to walk." It was all pretty overwhelming.

To say she rose to the challenge is putting it mildly. Reached in Texas, where she was rehearsing the title role in Dallas Opera's *Norma*, van den Heever is one of

many name-recognition stars who had a formative experience in Merola. "It was the first time I spent with a group of singers who were all incredibly talented," she said. "Yes, it made me feel insecure, but it was also tremendously empowering to think I might actually belong there." Others who found out they belonged over the years include such distinguished Merola grads as Thomas Hampson (1980),

niela Deborah Voigt (1985), Anna Netrebko (1996), Joyce DiDo-MEROLA nato (1997), Rolando Villazón (1998), and Nadine OPERA PROGRAM Sierra (2010).



Above, left to right: From 1966, Sylvia Davis, General Director Kurt Herbert Adler, Katherine Calloway, and Delcina Stevenson; Brenda Warren, Patricia Schuman, and Deborah Hightower in 1979's Carmen at Stern Grove; General Director Lotfi Mansouri, Christine Bullin, Maria Fortuna, and James Schwabacher; Elisabeth Söderström and Patricia Racette in a 1990 master class; Opera Center Director Sheri Greenawald with Eugene Brancoveanu; Thomas Pasatieri's Hotel Casablanca (2007)

Left: Cast from L'Elisir d'Amore (2010)

Beverly Sills put it this way: "Until the Merola Program got going, there was no place in this country where you could learn your craft in terms of performing." Merola broke through that confining mold.

Right from the start, in 1957, Merola has offered a kind of full-body baptism into the operatic world. Unlike many other summer training programs, which give young singers instruction and coaching but very little performance experience outside the chorus, Merola made significant and meaningful stage time an integral component. As quoted in *Voices Heard Round the Word*, Tracy Grant's 50th-anniversary book about the program, Beverly Sills put it this way: "Until the Merola Program got going, there was no place in this country where you could learn your craft in terms of performing." Merola broke through that confining mold.

Named in honor of San Francisco Opera founder and General Director Gaetano Merola, the program was the brainchild of his successor as general director, Kurt Herbert Adler, and Company patron James Schwabacher, himself a gifted singer. The program ran for four weeks in that inaugural summer.

Endorsed and expanded by subsequent general directors, Merola will welcome 29 artists this summer—23 singers, five apprentice coaches and one apprentice stage director—for an intense and immersive 11 weeks.

Greenawald and her colleague Mark Morash, the director of musical studies for San Francisco Opera Center, spend months sorting through applications and traveling around the country to audition over 500 singers in order to select each summer's Merola class. For someone like Toni Marie Palmertree, who had given up singing for eight years before trying again, being chosen for Merola in 2015 was a life-changing endorsement. "On paper I looked like one of the worst candidates possible," said Palmertree.

"Sheri and Mark heard something. They had suggestions for repertoire. They knew my voice better than I did."

"Sheri has an extraordinary ear for talent," said Matthew Epstein, whose wide-ranging operatic career includes stints as general director of the Welsh National Opera and artistic director of the Lyric Opera of Chicago. "And she really gets it as a special developer of talent. There is nothing as good for young









singers as performing. It puts them in situations where they can learn the most. I don't think the program has a rival in the country."

"Not everyone cares as much as Sheri about what happens to young singers," added Gayletha Nichols, the executive director of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. "You can't just mother them. You truly need to know what they need, when to pressure them and when to support them through a tougher period."

Greenawald's cozily chaotic office, on the fifth floor of the Opera House, looks like some opera-mad

fan's clubhouse. Pictures and press clippings of Merolini past and present share the crowded wall space with a dense color-coded schedule for this summer's classes and rehearsals, as well as several broadsheet newspaper shots of the exultant Golden State Warriors star Stephen Curry.

If dribbling and ball control are the essential, endlessly honed skills for a basketball player, language, argues Greenawald, is the equivalent for singers. "If I were running a conservatory," she said, "the kids would never sing in a foreign language until they'd studied it. If you don't know the shape of the vowel, let alone what the

word means, forget about it."

Even when she's laying down the law (acting, movement, and historical knowledge of the period are among her other preoccupations), Greenawald sounds ebullient and upbeat. Her bright eyes, mobile demeanor, and close-cropped hair and bangs lend the former soprano an elfin, ageless buoyancy. It's no mystery why so many young singers, past and present, take to her.

Merola wouldn't have lasted 60 years without a sound organizational

structure and sustaining ethos. On a budget that has grown from \$1.7 million in 2011 to \$3 million today, the program has its own offices, staff, and board. Merola contracts with San Francisco Opera to run the program. Executive Director Jean Kellogg oversees a support system that includes everything from housing the Merolini to help with headshots to \$12,000 in career development grants for up to five years after a singer's Merola summer is through.



Top, left to right: 1974 Grand Finals winners with Maestro Adler and James Schwabacher; Kristin Clayton in 1993's Die Fledermaus; 1997's Cenerentola with Joyce DiDonato and Harold Brock

Center, left to right: Thomas Hampson with Chester Patton; Il Matrimonio Segreto (2006); Anna Netrebko in the 1996 Merola Grand Finale Bottom, left to right: A 2007 master class with Martin Katz, Frederica von Stade, and Rockwell Blake; Elza van den Heever; Deborah Voigt with Régine Crespin; Leontyne Price







Summer 2017 Events

60th Anniversary Concert featuring Merola alumni, including Deborah Voigt, Quinn Kelsey, Pene Pati, and Zanda Švēde. Sunday, June 11, 8 p.m. at Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, San Francisco. Tickets begin at \$60.

Schwabacher Summer Concerts. The Merola Class of 2017 performs scenes from various operas. Thursday, July 6, 7:30 p.m. at San Francisco Conservatory of Music (50 Oak Street) and Sunday, July 9, 2:30 pm at Stanford University's Bing Concert Hall. \$25-\$45.

Triple Bill of Pergolesi's La Serva Padrona, Gustav Holst's Sāvitri, and William Walton's The Bear.

Thursday, July 20, 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, July 22, 2 p.m. at San Francisco Conservatory of Music. \$50 and \$70.

La Cenerentola by Gioachino Rossini. Thursday, August 3, 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, August 5, 2 p.m. at San Francisco Conservatory of Music. \$50 and \$70.

Merola Grand Finale of arias and ensembles. Saturday, August 19, 7:30 p.m. at War Memorial Opera House. \$25, \$40, and \$50.

Merola members are invited to attend master classes and special events throughout the summer.

For tickets or more information, visit merola.org or call (415) 936-2311.

> In 2015, baritone Kihun Yoon starred in the title role of Merola's Gianni Schicchi.





A loyal patron group adds a boosterish enthusiasm for all things Merola that Gayletha Nichols compares to the fan base for a beloved minor league baseball team. One supporter takes the entire Merolini class to dinner at Max's Opera Cafe every year. "And, boy, do they eat," noted a grinning Greenawald. Others open their homes to the singers, help them buy gowns and tuxes, and attend every performance and master class to cheer on their favorites. Audiences at Merola events can feel the love.

Now, thanks to a first-ever Merola commission, they can look forward to If I Were You, composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer's Faust-inflected tale based on a novel by Julien Green. It receives its world premiere with an all-Merola cast in 2019.

While some programs, like the touring Western Opera Theater productions, have gone by the wayside, the career-enhancing San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows program remains firmly entrenched. Merola singers who are awarded one of these prestigious multiyear posts will receive further training and performance opportunities in main stage Company productions. Many careers have been launched along this trajectory.

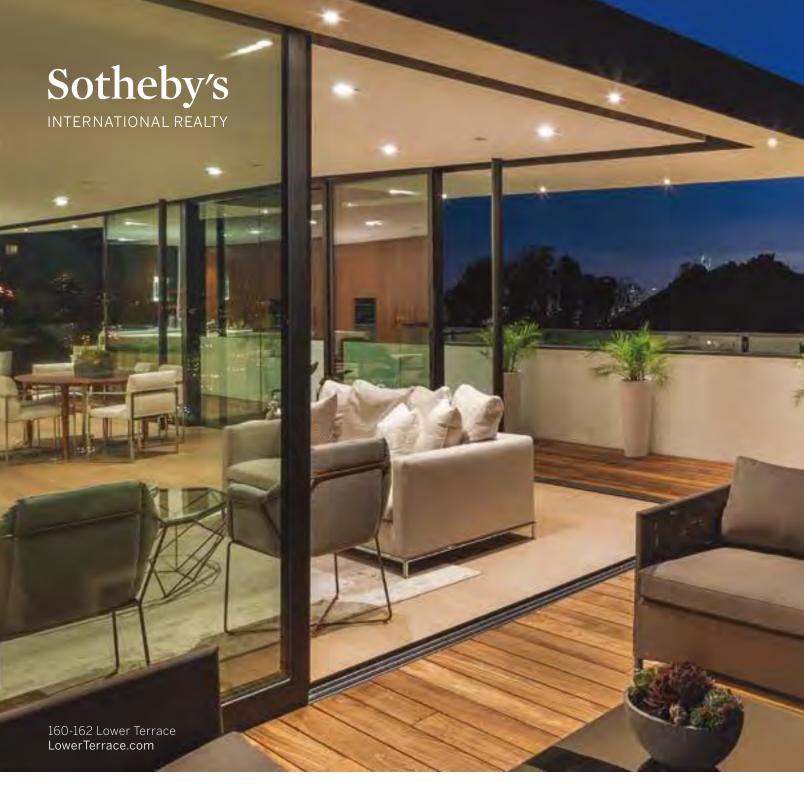
Competitive as it is to be chosen as a Merola singer, only some become Adlers and only a very few achieve stardom. As in any field, the opera pinnacles can seem punishingly narrow. Still, even if they don't have stage careers, many Merola alumni continue to work in opera, as administrators, teachers, and coaches.

No matter where it leads, a Merola summer is often its own transformative reward. Soprano Henrietta Davis (Merola 1976) was 20 years old when she was selected for the program. "I must have been the youngest one, and I was extremely shy and nervous," she said of that summer 41 years ago. Lots of memories came flooding back—being coached by Warren Jones, doing a stone-cold audition for General Director Adler, singing at Stern Grove.

As it happened, Davis got a big break in the midst of her Merola studies. Houston Grand Opera was auditioning for its Porgy and Bess at the time. Davis took a shot and won the role of Clara. She went straight from Merola to the show. But it wasn't so much that success she dwelled on, as it was the preparation that got her there.

"The camaraderie and being part of a group of excellent singers was pivotal," said Davis. "Knowing that everyone had faith in me to be in the program, even when I didn't always feel it myself, gave me the inspiration to be as good as I could be. No, more than that: It gave me the drive to aim for awesome every time."

Steven Winn is a San Francisco writer and critic whose work has appeared in Art News, California, Humanities, The New York Times, and Symphony. He previously profiled Matthew Shilvock for San Francisco Opera Magazine.



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

OPERA PREVIEW LECTURES

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

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

FAMILY PROGRAMS

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

CHECK OUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S BLOG

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

OPERA HOUSE TOURS

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

OPERA TALKS

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

Rigoletto: Emily Laurance Don Giovanni: Kayleen Asbo La Bohème: Laura Prichard

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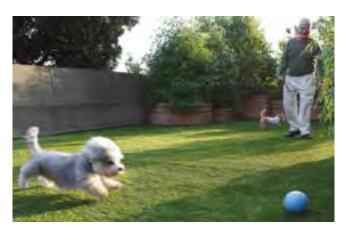
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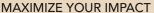


Orpheus members form a dynamic community of young donors who share a passion for opera and a belief in its future. Every gift to Orpheus enables San Francisco Opera to create, innovate, and share this remarkable art form with the widest possible audiences. Orpheus gifts are eligible to be matched, which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

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*The Orpheus Matching Fund is generously provided by Karen J. Kubin, Lisa P. Lindelef, Emily Hsi, and Michael Barrientos. Additional support for Orpheus provided by Mr. Benjamin Gregorski and Mr. A. S. Damji.

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John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn



nce 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 then-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.

Joseph E. Padula

Production Sponsor, Don Giovanni

ast year, San Francisco Opera received a call from an estate representative of the Joseph E. Padula Living Trust, who delighted us with news that the Company would receive a share of the Trust to sponsor this season's production of *Don Giovanni*, part of the trio of summer operas programmed to mark the 50th anniversary of San Francisco's Summer of Love.

Joseph E. Padula, affectionately known as "Joe" by loved ones, rose from humble beginnings at an orphanage in Albany, New York to become a multi-millionaire philanthropist in San Francisco. John Sucich, friend and Trust Designee of the Padula Trust, shares, "Joe was proud of his Italian heritage and had a particular fondness for Mozart and Italian opera. Sponsoring Don Giovanni is a dream come true for Joe, even though it was realized after his lifetime. I remember when he first arrived in San Francisco in 1967. It was the Summer of Love; that movement was the reason why Joe decided to stay for good. That's also when Joe started ushering at San Francisco Opera,



Joseph E. Padula in Italy

and would do so for many years. Before his first night ushering, Joe needed a dark suit jacket—he bought one at Goodwill Industries for five dollars." Decades later, Goodwill Industries would be named one of the beneficiaries of the Padula Trust. In all, 90 organizations will receive gifts from Joe's estate.

A financial genius who enjoyed investing in the stock market and traveling around the world, Joe lived a modest life at home in San Francisco. Maria Elisa Ruiz, Trustee of the Padula Trust, recalls, "Joe had a good sense of humor and was generous. He was a music lover, cared about animals, and was brilliant with numbers. I will always remember how he volunteered to take care of a feral cat colony in Golden Gate Park and spoke fluent Italian to his cats." He also worked with Steve Silver on the finances during the inception of *Beach Blanket Babylon*.

When San Francisco Opera simulcasts *Don Giovanni* on June 30 to over 30,000 people at AT&T Park, we can also marvel at the fact that Joe was a staffer in the ticket office for the San Francisco Giants! "Knowing that he helped bring this Summer of Love opera to so many supporters in the community is incredibly meaningful," remarks John Sucich. San Francisco Opera celebrates the life and legacy of Joseph E. Padula and is thankful for his remarkable support.



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Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem/Conductors Fund, Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund, and Emerging Stars Fund

(Sponsors, Maestro Montanaro, Arturo Chacon-Cruz, Ellie Dehn and Erika Grimaldi for *La Bohème*; Maestro Luisotti for *Rigoletto*; Sarah Shafer and Michael Sumuel for *Don Giovanni*)

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.

Joan and David Traitel/Great Singers Fund (Sponsors, Quinn Kelsey, Rigoletto; Ildebrando D'Arcangelo, Ana María Martínez, and Erwin Schrott, Don Giovanni)

"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, launched 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. "I am excited about



the Company debuts of Erwin Schrott and Ildebrando D'Arcangelo, who have graced the world's finest opera stages and are making their long-awaited debuts here. I am also thrilled to see the tremendously talented Mr. Kelsey and Ms. Martínez returning to us. 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

Bernard and Barbro Osher (Production Sponsors, Rigoletto)

A native of Maine, Bernard Osher became involved with San Francisco Opera as a subscriber nearly fifty years ago, shortly after moving here from New York. He and his wife Barbro, a native of Sweden, have been outstanding benefactors of Bay Area cultural programs ever since. Their generosity has touched every aspect of the Company's work, from artist appearances to production facilities. Established in 1977, the Bernard Osher Foundation supports higher education and the arts, locally and nationally. The Foundation has funded virtually every major arts organization in the area, including special youth programs. Higher education initiatives include community college support, *Lifelong Learning Institutes* on 119 campuses nationwide, and *Osher Centers for Integrative*



Medicine at the UCSF, Harvard Medical School, Vanderbilt and Northwestern Universities, and, in partnership with Barbro's Pro Suecia Foundation, at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden. Bernard is a longstanding member of San Francisco Opera's Board of Directors, serving on the Chairman's Council. Barbro is Honorary Consul General of Sweden in San Francisco, and serves as Chairman of the Board of the Osher Foundation.

DREW ALTIZER

Elizabeth and Burgess Jamieson Fund (Production Sponsors, La Bohème)

Libby and Burgess Jamieson have made an extraordinary commitment to the San Francisco Opera for over three decades by supporting traditional, classical productions. Their continuing enthusiasm for beloved, classic operas has assured an enduring place on the War Memorial Opera House stage for such applauded and memorable works as: Die Meistersinger, Il Trittico, La Bohème, Madama Butterfly, Turandot, Tosca, and La Traviata.

Both Libby and Burgess consider their ongoing support of the arts, especially the San Francisco Opera Association, as a means of ensuring important cultural, traditional links for the next generations' enjoyment.

Reminiscing about his fondness for *La Bohème*, Burgess remembers that he has had the pleasure of attending many performances of his favorite opera in numerous US and European venues. This opera, compared to other composers' works, he feels, is a rare chance for audiences to have an especially melodic experience. To ensure its musical enjoyment here again, he adds that: "Libby and I are pleased to bring *La Bohème* back to San Francisco this season in this beautifully sung and artistically staged production."

With over 45 years of experience in private and public investment management, Burgess is active on the San Francisco Board of Directors and its investment committee.

2017 REPERTORY

RIGOLETTO

Giuseppe Verdi

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

Production made possible, in part, by Bernard & Barbro Osher. June 6 performance made possible, in part, by Meyer Sound.

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;
and Joseph E. Padula*.

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.

TURANDOT

Giacomo Puccini

September 8, 12, 15, 21, 24, 30; November 18, 25, 28; December 3, 6, 9, 2017

Production made possible, in part, by

Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey;

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The Burgess & Elizabeth Jamieson Fund;

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ELEKTRA

Richard Strauss

September 9, 13, 17, 19, 22, 27, 2017

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

LA TRAVIATA

Giuseppe Verdi

September 23, 26, 28; October 1, 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 2017

Production made possible, in part, by Chevron.

MANON

Jules Massenet

November 4, 7, 10, 16, 19, 22, 2017

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

Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem.

GIRLS OF THE GOLDEN WEST

WORLD PREMIERE

Music by John Adams • Libretto by Peter Sellars November 21, 24, 26, 29; December 2, 5, 7, 10, 2017

Production made possible, in part, by:

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn; Jane Bernstein & Bob Ellis; and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Major support also provided by:

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Giacomo Puccini LA BOHÈME

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Matthew Shilvock, General Director

Nicola Luisotti,Music Director
Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair



This production is made possible, in part, by the Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson Fund.

Maestro Montanaro's appearance is made possible by the Conductors Fund, and the appearances of Ms. Grimaldi, Ms. Dehn, and Mr. Chacón-Cruz are made possible by the Emerging Stars Fund, both established by Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem.

Additional support for this production provided by Affiliate Sponsors Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson and the Diana Dollar Knowles Foundation.

LA BOHÈME

ACT I

It is Christmas Eve in Paris. Two poverty-stricken young artists, Marcello, a painter, and Rodolfo, a poet, attempt to work in their freezing garret. In desperation, they burn one of Rodolfo's dramas to keep warm. Their two roommates, Colline, a philosopher, and Schaunard, a musician, return home. Even though Schaunard has brought food, the four bohemians decide to eat their Christmas dinner in the Latin Quarter. Just then, Benoit, their landlord, arrives to demand his overdue rent. The men ply him with drink, and when he boasts of marital indiscretions, they feign moral indignation and throw him out. Marcello, Colline, and Schaunard leave for the Latin Quarter. Rodolfo, always the loner, promises to join them after finishing some work, but a knock on the door interrupts him. Mimì, a young neighbor, enters in search of a light for her candle. Clearly ill and breathless from the stairs, she faints and drops her room key. Rodolfo is entranced by her and manages to detain her by concealing the key. Either by accident or design, both their candles go out. As they search in the darkness for the lost key, their hands touch. They are instantly attracted and joyfully declare their love before leaving to join Rodolfo's friends.

ACT II

A festive crowd celebrates Christmas Eve in the Latin Quarter. At the Café Momus, Rodolfo introduces Mimì to his roommates. Their carefree mood changes when Musetta, Marcello's former lover, appears with Alcindoro, her aging suitor. Musetta, still in love with Marcello, attempts to attract his attention. He starts by deliberately ignoring her but cannot resist her obvious play for him. Musetta shrewdly gets rid of the besotted Alcindoro and leaves him to foot the entire bill as she and her bohemian friends escape through the crowd.

ACT III

Early one snowy February morning, Mimì seeks out Marcello, who is painting a mural at a tavern near the city gates. Mimì tells Marcello that she and Rodolfo have separated because of his jealousy. As Marcello tries to comfort her, Rodolfo appears, also seeking Marcello's advice. Mimì conceals herself and overhears their conversation. Rodolfo tells Marcello he is leaving Mimì because of her flirtations with other men. Marcello is skeptical and forces Rodolfo to admit the truth: Mimì is mortally ill and Rodolfo

is consumed by feelings of guilt and remorse, knowing as he does that the harsh conditions of their life together have endangered her health. Mimi's cough gives her away, and Rodolfo realizes she has overheard everything. Overwhelmed by her plight, Rodolfo promises to stay with Mimi until the spring, but Marcello and Musetta argue viciously and separate.

ACT IV

Rodolfo and Marcello, both now separated from Mimì and Musetta, are working in their garret. Schaunard and Colline arrive with supper, and the four fantasize about attending a fancy ball. Suddenly, Musetta enters with Mimì, now close to death and desperate to be with Rodolfo. Marcello and Musetta leave to summon a doctor and to buy Mimì a muff to warm her hands. Colline also departs to sell his beloved overcoat. Left alone for a few moments, Mimì and Rodolfo remember their happier times together. The others return. But before the doctor can arrive, Mimì dies.

First performance: Turin, Teatro Regio; February 1, 1896

First performance in the U.S.: Los Angeles, Dal Conte Opera Company; October 14, 1897

First San Francisco Opera performance: September 26, 1923

La Bohème has been performed in 44 previous seasons at San Francisco Opera. For complete casting and other information, visit archive.sfopera.com.

Personnel: 12 principals, 48 choristers, 20 children choristers, 5 supernumeraries; **85 total**

Orchestra: 2 flutes, 1 piccolo, 2 oboes, 1 English horn, 2 clarinets, 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 cimbasso, 1 timpani, 4 percussion, 1 harp; regular (40) strings; 68 total

Onstage: 2 piccolos, 4 trumpets, 2 snare drums; 8 total

Backstage: 2 percussion

The children singing in this production (listed after the artist profiles) are members of the San Francisco Girls and Boys Choruses. The San Francisco Girls Chorus is led by Artistic Director Lisa Bielawa and Music Director and Principal Conductor Valérie Sainte-Agathe. The San Francisco Boys Chorus is led by Artistic Director Ian Robertson.

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Conductor

Carlo Montanaro

Director

John Caird

Production Designer

David Farley

Lighting Designer

Michael James Clark

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Fight Director

Dave Maier

Assistant Conductor

Christopher Ocasek

Prompter

Stephanie Rhodes

Musical Preparation

John Churchwell Noah Lindquist

Fabrizio Corona

Supertitles

John Caird

Assistant Director

Shawna Lucey

Stage Managers

Jodi Gage

Darin Burnett

Assistant Stage Managers

Sarah Bingel

Thea Railey

Andrew Landis

Jayme O'Hara

Jimmy Marcheso

Costume Supervisor

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Opera in four acts by **Giacomo Puccini**Libretto by **Giuseppe Giacosa** and **Luigi Illica**Based on the novel *Scènes de la vie de bohème* by **Henri Murger**

LA BOHÈME

(Sung in Italian with English supertitles)

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Marcello Audun Iversen

Rodolfo Arturo Chacón-Cruz

Colline Scott Conner

Schaunard Brad Walker†

Benoit Dale Travis

Mimì Erika Grimaldi

Julie Adams (6/20, 25)

A Prune Vendor Michael Jankosky

Parpignol Colby Roberts

A child BeaAlyssa Cortado*

Musetta Ellie Dehn

Alcindoro Dale Travis

A Custom-House Sergeant Bojan Knežević

A Custom-House Officer Torlef Borsting

Students, townspeople, shopkeepers, street vendors, soldiers, waiters, children

*San Francisco Opera debut †Current Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: Mid-nineteenth-century Paris

ACT I: A garret
ACT II: The Latin Quarter

-INTERMISSION-

ACT III: A city gate, the Barrière d'Enfer ACT IV: The garret

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.

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The performance will last approximately two hours and twenty minutes.



or all the drama and emotion of *La Bohème*, composer Giacomo Puccini and his librettists Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica don't really tell us much about the course of Rodolfo's and Mimi's relationship. In sum, in Act One Mimi is alive and at the end of Act Four she is dead, and that is really all the story there is. *La Bohème* is a curiously plotless opera.

And that is no wonder when we consider the source, Henri Murger's oft-mentioned but rarely read—and delightful—*Scènes de la vie de bohème*. These *Scènes* are just that, 22 sketches or episodes that appeared in 1848 as a serial in *Le Corsaire-Satan*, were adapted for the stage in 1849 by Murger and Théodore Barrière, and published as a book in 1851. They describe the life of the bohemian artists and writers of whom Murger, who was born in 1822, was one. Several of the characters occur in more than one chapter, and the opera-lover leafing through the pages of the *Scènes* will recognize the names of Rodolphe, Marcel, Schaunard, Colline, Mimi, Musette, and even M. Benoît. Murger drew from life, and virtually all the originals of his characters have been identified: Rodolphe is a self-portrait, down to the detail of describing his head as being "as bald as a knee," but for the rest, he availed himself of an artist's freedom to alter, mix, and compound.

The Scènes were translated into Italian in 1859, badly cut, and again, this time complete, in 1872. This later translation was reprinted in 1890, and that is the version through which Puccini, whose French was never better than approximate, got to know the book, though probably not until the winter of 1892-93. At the beginning of that winter, he has completed Manon Lescaut, which would bring him his first big success, a success that was the sweeter for his having dared to compete with Jules Massenet's Manon of 1884, and he was looking for new material. (It has been accurately observed that Puccini spent more time looking for librettos than setting them.) At one point he was working on two operas simultaneously, La Bohème and La Lupa (The She-Wolf), the latter based on a novel by Giovanni Verga, with whose Cavalleria Rusticana, Puccini's younger rival Pietro Mascagni had scored a stunning success in 1890. And not to forget Buddha, a project that also occupied Puccini briefly but intensely about this time.

The Bohème librettists, enlisted partly by Puccini himself, partly by his publisher, Giulio Ricordi, were Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, both of whom had been part of the Manon Lescaut work force. Illica's task was to work out the scenario in broad outlines while Giacosa, an older man and a playwright and littérateur of some distinction in his own right, was responsible for the detail work and the versification. The two writers and the composers regularly maddened each other, but they got the job done—superbly—and not least because all three were able to give

Left: Couple Walking Through the Snow (c. 1900) by Anna Whelan Betts

Right: A 1911 French periodical commemorated the 50th anniversary of Henri Murger's death with a toast from characters of his Scènes de la vie de bohème. Murger's serial inspired Puccini and his librettists to create La Bohème.

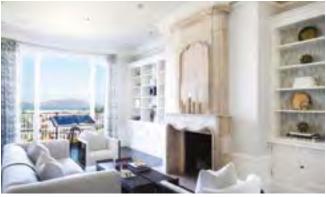
in at certain crucial moments. Some thanks are also due to Ricordi for his diplomatic skill and a few specific contributions. They worked together again on *Tosca* (1900) and *Madama Butterfly* (1904), and had Giacosa not died in 1906, this formidable team would undoubtedly have continued their work together.

To draw a coherent and shapely libretto from the vivid but non-linear *Scènes* was hard, but the Murger-Barrière dramatization at least showed it could be done, even though the play itself was never considered as the basis for a text. One reason was financial: Barrière's heirs were still around, and an adaptation of *La Vie de bohème* would have entailed hefty fees. Puccini's central concern was Mimi's illness and death: like Murger's Rodolphe, he had a certain *faible* for the vulnerable *femme fragile*. And it was in creating the character of Mimì that Illica was at his most boldly interventionist with respect to its literary source. Though she does die at the end, Murger's Mimi is a pretty tough number and distinctly promiscuous all along; the delicate Mimì who touches our hearts in the opera is based more on a character called Francine, who appears in just one chapter of the *Scènes*. (Someone had a good ear; Mimì is a better name for singing.)

The outcome was a wonderfully original opera, something the



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Act III of the Company's 2014 production of La Bohème, with Alexia Voulgaridou as Mimì and Michael Fabiano as Rodolfo.

extreme familiarity of *La Bohème* can keep us from noticing and appreciating. Puccini could have called it a Conversation Piece, the designation Richard Strauss would use for *Capriccio* nearly half a century later. Its essence is rapid exchanges, even telescoped and superimposed exchanges, occasionally halted in a freeze-frame, and early audiences found the speed of exchange in the scene at the Café Momus bewildering. One doesn't immediately think of *La Bohème* as resembling Verdi's *Falstaff*, whose premiere took place just eight days after that of Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*; nonetheless, *Falstaff*, about which people complained that it lacked arias, was a model Puccini studied carefully and used to his profit and unobtrusively.

Even the three famous arias—Rodolfo's and Mimì's self-portraits in Act One and Mimì's attempt at a farewell in Act Three, "Donde lieta usci"—are intimate conversation pieces, the latter rising to forte for just two single measures, and all three end softly. Apropos the conversational style in *La Bohème*, it is interesting to hear how great a role *parlando* (speaking) plays and for the score-reader to observe how meticulous Puccini's notation is for the many nuanced degrees between real singing and real speech. (Most of these subtleties are lost in performance.)

Except of course for the Rodolfo-Mimì duets that bring down the curtain at the ends of the first and third acts, the other solos and ensembles don't have formal closes but are folded into whatever comes next. In some ways, Musetta's waltz-aria in the Momus scene is in this respect the most interesting of all. Puccini recycled several pre-Bohème musical ideas of his own for this opera, and this aria is one of them. Isolated as a concert piece or on recording, it turns out not to be a terribly interesting piece, but in context—and I mean not only the dramatic but also the aural context—it is wonderful. It is the comments of Alcindoro, Musetta's embarrassed escort, and of course Marcello, her once and future lover whom she is trying to tease and torment and recapture, that turn her song into a vivid object and into another self-portrait. It is possible to stop for applause after Musetta's flourish with the high B, but the music really wants to rush right on.

Puccini was especially proud of Act Four. He liked to boast that he had been the first to begin the opening and final acts with the same music, responding to the parallel situations his librettists had presented to him: Rodolfo and Marcello disheartened, about the cold in Act One, about the defection of their girlfriends in Act Four; the arrival of food, a feast in Act One because Schaunard has earned some unexpected francs, a single herring in Act Four; high-jinks, interrupted by Benoit with his demands for the rent in

Act One, by the arrival of Musetta and the dying Mimì in Act Four; in both, a tender scene between Rodolfo and Mimì, but with vastly different outcomes. That difference is symbolized by the play of light in the two scenes: in the one, the moonlight that suddenly floods the room and surrounds her face like a nimbus, celebrated in the orchestra by a hushed and shimmering A major chord, set in its most vulnerable distribution, with E in the bass; in the other, the glare of spring sunlight from which Rodolfo has to shield Mimì's eyes by improvising a curtain. But that "same" opening music is made subtly different by its orchestra coloring, as gray as the Parisian sky at the beginning, feverishly bright when it returns.

And having seen what Richard Wagner had done in *Götterdämmerung*, Puccini, operating of course on a much less ambitious scale, makes virtually his entire last act a recapitulation of earlier music. As lovers will, Rodolfo and Mimì revisit their first encounter, and Mimì reveals that she knew Rodolfo had pocketed her key. ("I was helping destiny along," he explains.) The strains of "Che gelida manina" and "Mi chiamano Mimì" are reduced now to the most fragile, translucent, incorporeal of specters. (That is when the last diehards in the audience go to pieces.) And always, as throughout the opera, the story of the contrast of cold and warmth.

The story goes that Puccini wept when he came to compose Mimi's death. In all that company, she dies alone, the moment itself unnoticed by anyone on stage, remarked only by the orchestra in a B minor chord for a few woodwinds and horns, with a pppp cymbal stroke. Perhaps he did weep, but the sources are not impeccably reliable. But we know for sure that when she dies, he drew a little skull and crossbones on her now empty stave in the score: as well as being an intensely emotional and erotically susceptible man, Puccini was always the superb and knowing craftsman, and as such by necessity a bit distanced. La Bohème, in which Puccini came truly of age as an artist (at 37!), is a masterwork we too easily take for granted, a work in which he created four fascinatingly and sometimes exasperatingly complex characters—the two couples, Rodolfo and Mimì, Marcello and Musetta—and it is a song about the frailty of love and happiness, about the ephemerality of what Jorge Luis Borges called our "wondrous, fragile life." And for more than a hundred years now, we have brought our love to La Bohème perhaps most of all because it is a deeply truthful work. 🦚

The late Michael Steinberg was a longtime program annotator for the San Francisco Symphony and the New York Philharmonic. This essay was published in a previous edition of San Francisco Opera Magazine.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

very opera performance is a triumph of the senses. The eyes revel in the grand spectacle of costumes and set designs while the ears savor vocal acrobatics. There is one sense that we rarely imagine to be part of the operatic experience: taste. And yet, hidden behind a production, there lies a secret world of culinary pleasures. From the extravagant banquet scenes in *Don Giovanni* and *Rigoletto* to the Café Momus in *La Bohème*, the story of food in opera is rich with fascinating tales that shed light both on the lives of composers as well as the work of stage professionals.

Operas such as
La Bohème
involve a complex
gastronomic dimension
for the Company's
prop department

Cooking Lessons with the Prop Master

As you quickly come to realize, creating convincing props is an art, involving various tricks of the trade. San Francisco Opera Master of Properties Lori Harrison is a singular expert in the field and feels passionately about the performances' culinary components.

After starting in 1985 as an assistant stage manager, Harrison became in 1998 the first woman to run the Company's property department. "The great thing about props is that it's multidimensional," she explains. "It involves historical research as well as knowledge of technical theater." Handling food adds even more complexity: the staff of the prop department must become culinary historians, researching gastronomic habits of each production's setting. They must employ diplomatic skills when dealing with challenging requests from directors or performers, and forge alliances between the opera house and chefs who create delicacies that meet each production's overall aesthetic.

When embarking on research for a new production, Harrison starts from her own personal library, hidden away in a tiny backstage room. She has

assembled a precious collection of cookbooks and books on props from around the world. She also hunts for photographs and images of street vendors, carts, and *métiers oubliés* (forgotten obsolete jobs) to understand what food was like in each particular period. "I tend to look at paintings of parties, table spreads, and still lifes from the 17th and 18th century, because that gives me the best clue of what was plentiful at the time, such as figs and grapes," Harrison says. "You wouldn't want to put bananas in a 19th-century French food cart!"

Just how does one make a grocery list for a production? "Directors and designers decide which foods are necessary for every performance, and which props have to be real," Harrison explains. "Then we ask singers what they would like, and we work together with them, according to everyone's needs and dietary restrictions." Sometimes there is the added challenge of having to match the fake food with the real. "And we've got high-definition cameras now, which once upon a time we didn't have," she adds. "Everything has to look perfect!"

As for the actual food preparation, Harrison has some ready substitutes: oysters are "played" by canned pears, apricot halves can be raw eggs, and a slice of watermelon with some food coloring mimics a steak. What's more, she reveals, mashed bananas have the quality to become almost anything. "We even have a recipe for edible blood, in such cases as Strauss' *Salome*," says Harrison. "The ingredients include chocolate syrup, food coloring, and corn syrup."

Alcohol is not allowed in San Francisco Opera productions, so the drinks are a source for endless innovation. White wine can be replaced with watered-down grape juice or chamomile tea; brandy and other hard liquors with iced tea or dark apple juice; champagne with ginger ale or extremely watered-down tea. "Some singers prefer water with food coloring, others prefer juice or Gatorade," Harrison says. "So, every time, we have to start from the original drink's color, and then we get creative." She recalls that some singers specifically request "super flat, warm Diet Coke" for red wine. That may sound odd but, as she reminds us, "the performers are the ones out there on stage, so we provide them with whatever they like!"

Left: Nadine Sierra as Musetta in the Company's 2014 production of La Bohème.

Right: In 1988, Mirella Freni and Luciano Pavarotti starred as the lovers Rodolfo and Mimì at San Francisco Opera. For Act II's Café Momus scene, Pavarotti specifically requested a table spread of salami, chicken, roast beef, cheese, bread, ragù, lobster, grapes, bananas, and vanilla ice cream for his and Freni's dining pleasure.

A Foodie Opera House

Many humorous accounts of culinary adventures eventually wound up in a unique volume: the San Francisco Opera Cookbook, a colorful collection of recipes and anecdotes that members of the Company documented over several years. The Company gifted the cookbook to late General Director Lotfi Mansouri, a gourmand himself, on the occasion of his 2001 retirement. Since then, it has acquired an almost mythical status among members of the Company.

The cookbook paints a vivid portrait of the Company's food culture. There we find members of the prop department reminiscing on the challenges of obtaining specific foods not in season. For the 2000–01 production of *The Magic Flute*, the prop department had to select, preserve, and handle a large quantity of fresh figs. There was one complication: fig season was practically over. The figs were finally located, but only after an audacious quest through "the dark and dangerous back alleys of San Francisco's produce world," according to the cookbook. The troubles weren't quite finished, however. Would the figs survive freezing and thawing? Would their mushiness create disaster for the costume department? Did the singer even like figs? Fortunately, the fig adventure had a happy ending and the successful enterprise became a matter of pride among the prop department.

Other challenges include obtaining complicated local dishes, specifically requested by the production team. An unforgettable case was Charpentier's *Louise* (1999) and its cassoulet—an elaborate meat stew with white beans typical of southern French cuisine. A "Great Cassoulet Cook-Off" was organized: the contenders were versions of the dish prepared by several San Francisco French restaurants that still had it on their menus in August and September (not a given since cassoulet is a winter specialty). For each performance, a different cassoulet was selected; then, directors, stage managers, and performers participated in the tasting panel. The winner? An excellent cassoulet from San Francisco's oldest French bistro, Le Central. Though the production of *Louise* made everyone a few pounds heavier, the "Great Cook-Off" remains one of the most treasured stories from San Francisco Opera's collective culinary memory.





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"We even have a recipe for edible blood, in such cases as Strauss' *Salome*," says Master of Properties
Lori Harrison

There are also times when the prop department must resort to cooking things themselves. This was the case of a production of Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*. In Act Three, the protagonists enjoy *Leberknödel*—a traditional Austrian soup with dumplings made of liver, breadcrumbs, and eggs. Harrison herself writes in the cookbook that the dish was specifically requested by the director, but it proved impossible to find a Bay Area restaurant that could make it. The hardship of this task did not stop members of the prop department: they learned how to make the dumplings from scratch, to the great excitement of the cast and profound admiration of Mansouri. "Nowhere else in the world," he declared, would he find "such care, such attention, and such an effort to come up with the right things."

When perusing further the pages of the cookbook, one can't help but pause over a 1988 production of *La Bohème*. It's a well-known fact that the Café Momus scene in Act Two requires an extensive shopping list. In this case, the celebrated tenor playing Rodolfo, Luciano Pavarotti, decided to contribute to it with his own specific gastronomic suggestions: salami, chicken, roast beef, cheese, bread, ragù, lobster, grapes, bananas, and, intriguingly, a little dish of vanilla ice cream—not for himself but for the soprano playing Mimì, Mirella Freni.

There was an important detail to consider: the tenor was on a strict diet. He was only allowed to eat specific foods with one single loophole: onstage, he could eat whatever he pleased. During each performance, nobody would give much attention to the tenor, as Rodolfo is featured less prominently in Act Two. Only the lighting crew working at a higher stage level had a view of the entire scene, and they witnessed the tenor devouring the sumptuous meal... and Mimi's ice cream first!

As Harrison reminds us, funny episodes such as this one are part of the secret culinary pleasures of opera: "Once the performance is live, nobody can touch the singers... not even if they want to eat all that's on the menu!" A triumph of the senses indeed.

Marina Romani is a music and film researcher and performer, trained in Western classical voice and Afro-Caribbean music. She has a doctoral degree from UC Berkeley.

A Puccini Family Recipe

Cooking for friends such as composer Pietro Mascagni was one of Giacomo Puccini's greatest pleasures. His modest origins and financial struggles in his youth turned him into a clever chef who could conjure tasty dishes from the humblest of ingredients: pasta with eels and herring with radish are counted among some of his most original creations. A passionate hunter, Puccini also enjoyed cooking the birds that he hunted near his Torre del Lago home at Lake Massaciuccoli.

There was one recipe that he guarded with utmost secrecy, a unique way to cook folaghe (coot). Sometimes mistaken for ducks or geese, folaghe are small birds with predominantly black plumage. They are now a protected species



in most of Italy, but during Puccini's time they were common in the area of Lake Massaciuccoli. The composer would not disclose his recipe to anybody. Finally, from a private collection in Milan—a letter by Puccini dated December 9, 1903—details emerged of his culinary creation.

Puccini's version differs from the typical way of cooking *folaghe*. With its intense flavors, this dish has been received enthusiastically for generations—so much so that nowadays, Tuscan restaurants serve *tagliatelle* or risotto with Puccinistyle coot.

FOLAGHE ALLA PUCCINI

(If coot is not readily available, substitute duck or Cornish game hen.)

First, carefully remove the coot's skin. Marinate the meat in cool water and vinegar for one to two hours. Rinse, then cut the meat in quarters.

Warm a pot on the stove and place the meat quarters in the pot with a bit of olive oil, carrots, plenty of onion, some basil, marjoram, *mentuccia* (lesser calamint), bay leaf, salt, and green or red bell pepper. Cover the pot and let the meat simmer on low heat for approximately an hour.

Remove the lid and sear the meat until slightly browned. Then, add a cup of water mixed with a little wine. When the water is absorbed, add some chicken broth and cover the pot again. Let it cook on low heat for 30 more minutes, while adding some flour to thicken the sauce. Once the meat is ready, the sauce can be strained and used as a spread on crostini.

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CARLO MONTANARO (Cecina, Italy) Conductor Music director at Teatr Wielki in Warsaw from 2011 to 2014, Italian conductor Carlo

Montanaro made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2016 leading Carmen. Montanaro has conducted opera and concerts in major venues including Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, Teatro Massimo in Palermo, Fondazione Arena in Verona, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Teatro Comunale in Florence, Fondazione Arturo Toscanini in Parma, and Teatro Verdi in Trieste. Recent engagements include Tosca at Opéra de Monte Carlo, Rigoletto at Warsaw Opera and Oper Frankfurt, Maria Stuarda at Seattle Opera, La Bohème at the Sydney Opera House, and La Traviata at the Dallas Opera. Next season, Montanaro leads performances of Madama Butterfly at Seattle Opera and La Traviata at Deutsche Oper Berlin.



ERIKA GRIMALDI
(Asti, Italy)
Mimì
Soprano Erika
Grimaldi made
her San Francisco
Opera debut in
2016 as Micaëla in
Carmen. Her recent

appearances include Nedda in Pagliacci at Turin's Teatro Regio, Mathilde in Guillaume Tell at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, the title role of Giovanna d'Arco at Milan's Teatro alla Scala, Mimì at Naples's Teatro di San Carlo, and Adina in L'Elisir d'Amore at Deutsche Oper Berlin. She also joined Jonas Kaufmann in a scene from *Il Trovatore* on the tenor's all-Verdi CD for Sony Classical. Grimaldi has frequently performed at Turin's Teatro Regio under the baton of its music director, Gianandrea Noseda, including the roles of Desdemona in Otello, Amelia in Simon Boccanegra, and the Countess in Le Nozze di Figaro. She appears as Mimì at August's Edinburgh International Festival and next season as Nedda at Deutsche Oper Berlin.



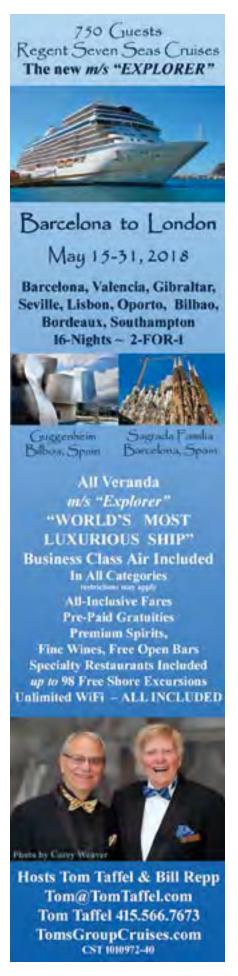
JULIE ADAMS
(Burbank, California)
Mimì
A former San
Francisco Opera
Adler Fellow, Julie
Adams made her
Company debut as
Mimì in La Bohème

for Families. She also appeared with San Francisco Opera as Kate Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly, Kristina in The Makropulos Case, First Lady in The Magic Flute, and Karolka in Jenufa. A winner of the 2015 Elizabeth Connell prize for aspiring dramatic sopranos, the 2015 Sarah Tucker Study Grant, and the 2014 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Adams participated in the 2014 Merola Opera Program, where she performed the role of Blanche DuBois in André Previn's A Streetcar Named Desire. Other credits include Mimì and Anna Sørensen in Kevin Puts' Silent Night with Opera San Jose; Lia in L'Enfant Prodigue at the International Vocal Arts Institute in Tel Aviv; and Pamina in Die Zauberflöte at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara. The 2017–18 season sees Adams return to San Francisco Opera as Freia and Gerhilde in the Ring cycle, her role debut as the Countess in Le Nozze di Figaro at Michigan Opera Theatre, and Blanche DuBois at Opera Idaho.



ARTURO
CHACÓN-CRUZ
(Sonora, Mexico)
Rodolfo
Tenor Arturo ChacónCruz made his San
Francisco Opera
debut in 2012 as
the Duke of Mantua

in Rigoletto. He has also performed Rodolfo in Stockholm, Bologna, Berlin, Liège, Washington, D.C., and Munich's Bavarian State Opera; the title role of Les Contes d'Hoffmann with Milan's Teatro alla Scala, Vienna's Theater an der Wien, Sweden's Malmö Opera, and in Turin; Roméo in Roméo et Juliette with Palm Beach Opera; and Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly with Minnesota Opera and Washington National Opera. Other career highlights include the title role of Werther in Lyon; Alfredo Germont in La Traviata with Washington National Opera;





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the title role of Faust in Montpellier, France; Rinuccio in Gianni Schicchi in Naples; Christian in Cyrano de Bergerac in Valencia; and Ruggero in La Rondine with Venice's Teatro la Fenice. This past season, Chacón-Cruz sang Werther in Barcelona, Des Grieux in Manon in Monte Carlo, Alfredo Germont in Rome and Valencia. Don Iosé in Carmen in Palermo and Zurich, as well as a criticallyacclaimed role debut as Macduff in Macbeth in Los Angeles and Vienna. Upcoming performances include Rodolfo in Hamburg, Alfredo Germont in Munich and Rome, and the Duke in Los Angeles and Verona.



ELLIE DEHN
(Anoka, Minnesota)
Musetta
Since making her
Company debut in
2012 as the Countess
in Le Nozze di Figaro,
soprano Ellie Dehn
has appeared at

San Francisco Opera as Donna Anna in Don Giovanni, Fiordiligi in Così fan tutte, Musetta, and Micaëla in Carmen. Recent successes include her Royal Opera, Covent Garden debut as the Countess, the title role of Rusalka with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, her Oper Köln debut as Donna Anna, and her La Scala debut as Antonia in Les Contes d'Hoffmann. She has also returned to the Metropolitan Opera to perform as Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni and Musetta. Dehn enjoys being a regular guest on A Prairie Home Companion, and she has recently appeared as Alice Ford in Falstaff with San Diego Opera and Musetta at Naples's Teatro di San Carlo.



AUDUN IVERSEN
(Rana, Norway)
Marcello
Norwegian baritone
Audun Iversen most
recently appeared at
San Francisco Opera
as Figaro in 2013's
The Barber of Seville.

Career highlights include Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Copenhagen's Royal Danish Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and in a new production at the Glyndebourne Festival; the title role of

Eugene Onegin at Royal Danish Opera, Opéra de Lille, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, and English National Opera; Sharpless in Madama Butterfly at Royal Danish Opera and Opera di Roma; Albert in Werther at Zurich Opera House and Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; and Marcello at Covent Garden and Royal Danish Opera. Next season, Iversen will perform Giorgio Germont in La Traviata for Opera Sør, and he will make his role and house debuts as Fieramosca in Benvenuto Cellini with Opéra national de Paris.



SCOTT CONNER
(Kansas City, Kansas)
Colline
Previously making
his San Francisco
Opera debut as
Tom in 2014's Un
Ballo in Maschera,
American bass Scott

Conner made company debuts this past season at the Opéra national de Paris as Nerbulone in Cavalli's Eliogabalo, and at Royal Opera, Covent Garden and the Metropolitan Opera as the Police Commissioner in Der Rosenkavalier. He also returned to Amsterdam's Dutch National Opera as Nerbulone. Conner's other career highlights include Don Profondo in Il Viaggio a Reims and Zoroastro in Orlando at Zurich Opera House, Tom at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and a Rossini recital at Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. Next season, he returns to the Dutch National Opera as Nerbulone and Semperoper Dresden as Sparafucile in Rigoletto. Conner is a 2012 graduate of Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts.



BRAD WALKER (Lake Zurich, Illinois) Schaunard American bassbaritone Brad Walker is a second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and alumnus 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 performed 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, Chautaugua Opera Company, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and received an award in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Walker appeared earlier this season as Dumas in the Company's Andrea Chénier and as a Stagehand in The Makropulos Case.



DALE TRAVIS
(Trenton, New Jersey)
Benoit, Alcindoro
Bass-baritone Dale
Travis made his San
Francisco Opera
debut in 1988 as
the Keeper of the
Madhouse in The

Rake's Progress. That same season he also appeared in Manon Lescaut, Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk, and La Bohème and has since appeared in 40 Company productions, most recently in 2016 as Dr. Kolenatý in The Makropulos Case. Travis has been a frequent guest artist at the most prestigious opera companies in the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Washington National Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Santa Fe Opera Festival, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Spoleto Festival USA, Saito Kinen Music Festival, Teatro Regio in Torino, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, Berlin Komische Oper, and the New Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv. In recent seasons, he performed the role of the Musicmaster in Ariadne auf Naxos with Minnesota Opera, the Sacristan in Tosca with the Dallas Opera, Frank in Die Fledermaus with the Seiii Ozawa Music Academy, and Benoit and Alcindoro with the Glimmerglass Festival. Future engagements include a return to the Dallas Opera for La Traviata, the Sacristan at Michigan Opera Theatre, and Bartolo in The Barber of Seville with Kentucky Opera.





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COLBY ROBERTS (Knoxville, Tennessee) Parpignol A San Francisco Opera Chorus member since 1992, tenor Colby Roberts has

sung several roles with the Company, including Sam (*The Ballad of Baby Doe*) and the First Slave (*Die Zauberflöte*). He has also performed with Orlando Opera, Connecticut Grand Opera, and New Jersey State Opera, among other companies. Roberts' Bay Area credits include San Francisco Lyric Opera, Berkeley Opera, and with Livermore Opera as Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and *Luisa Miller*, and the title roles of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and *Werther*.



MICHAEL JANKOSKY (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) A Prune Vendor Tenor and San Francisco Opera Chorus member Michael Jankosky has performed

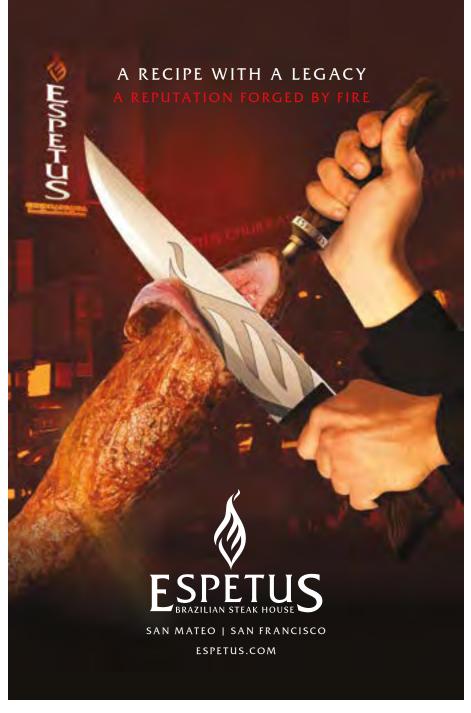
with many Bay Area companies. Recent credits include the Painter, Foreigner in West Edge Opera's production of Lulu, the tenor soloist in Handel's L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato with American Bach Soloists, Fenton in Falstaff with North Bay Opera, and Sam in Susannah with San Francisco Parlor Opera. Jankosky received his Bachelor of Music from the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music and his Master of Music from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.



TORLEF BORSTING (Hilo, Hawaii) Custom-House Officer A member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, baritone Torlef Borsting made his Company solo

debut in 2006 as a Soldier in *The Maid of Orleans*. Most recently, he appeared as a Moroccan Soldier in the world premiere of Marco Tutino's *Two Women (La Ciociara)*, a member of the Quintet and







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BOJAN KNEŽEVIĆ (Belgrade, Serbia) Custom-House Sergeant Former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and Merola alumnus Bojan Knežević made his Company debut

as Marquis d'Obigny in La Traviata in 1995 and has since appeared with the Company in over 30 roles. Most recently, the bass-baritone and San Francisco Opera Chorus member appeared as a Notary in Don Pasquale, Antonio in Le Nozze di Figaro, and as a member of the Ensemble in Sweeney Todd. Career highlights include Frosch in Die Fledermaus with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Scarpia in Tosca with Mississippi Opera, the Four Villains in Les Contes d'Hoffmann with Sacramento Opera and Fort Worth Opera, and the title role of Le Nozze di Figaro with the New National Theatre in Tokyo. At San Francisco's Opera Parallèle he also appeared in the title role of Wozzeck and George Wilson in John Harbison's The Great Gatsby.



JOHN CAIRD
(London, England)
Director
British stage director
John Caird made his
San Francisco Opera
debut in 2014 with
this production of
La Bohème. He is an

honorary associate director of the Royal Shakespeare Company where he directed over 20 productions of Shakespeare, classic plays, and new plays, as well as a regular director with the National Theatre in London and principal guest director of the Royal Dramatic Theatre, Stockholm. Caird's recent work includes revivals of his production of Puccini's *Tosca* with Los Angeles Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago; a new Japanese language production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* at Geigeki in Tokyo; and a new production of *Love's Labour's Lost* at the Stratford Shakespeare

Festival in Canada. Other opera productions include *Parsifal* in Chicago, *Don Carlos* in Houston and Toronto, and *Don Giovanni* at Welsh National Opera, as well as his own opera *Brief Encounter* (with music by André Previn) for Houston Grand Opera. His new version of Bernstein's *Candide*, originally performed at the National Theatre, will be produced at Weimar Opera later this year and Los Angeles Opera in 2018.



DAVID FARLEY
(Oxfordshire,
England)
Production Designer
Tony Awardnominated designer
David Farley made
his San Francisco
Opera debut with

this production of *La Bohème*, which has also been seen at Houston Grand Opera



and Toronto's Canadian Opera Company. His recent credits include Snapshots at Goodspeed Opera House; Daddy Long Legs at Broadway's Davenport Theatre; Kiss Me, Kate at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival; A Little Night Music at London's Garrick Theatre and Broadway's Walter Kerr Theatre; and Sweeney Todd in Dublin. In 2008, he was nominated for Tony Awards for best costume and set design for Sunday in the Park with George which also received an Outer Critics Circle Award, Olivier Award, and Evening Standard Best Design Award.



MICHAEL JAMES CLARK (Los Angeles, California) Lighting Designer Michael James Clark made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2014 with

this production of *La Bohème*. As the lighting supervisor for Houston Grand Opera, his recent work includes Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*, David Hanlon and Stephanie Fleischmann's *After the Storm*, *The Magic Flute*, *Otello*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Aida*, *Il Trovatore*, *La Traviata*, *Mary Stuart*, and *The Rape of Lucretia*. For seven seasons Clark served as a member of the lighting department at Santa Fe Opera. He holds a bachelor's degree in lighting design from the North Carolina School of the Arts.



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.



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

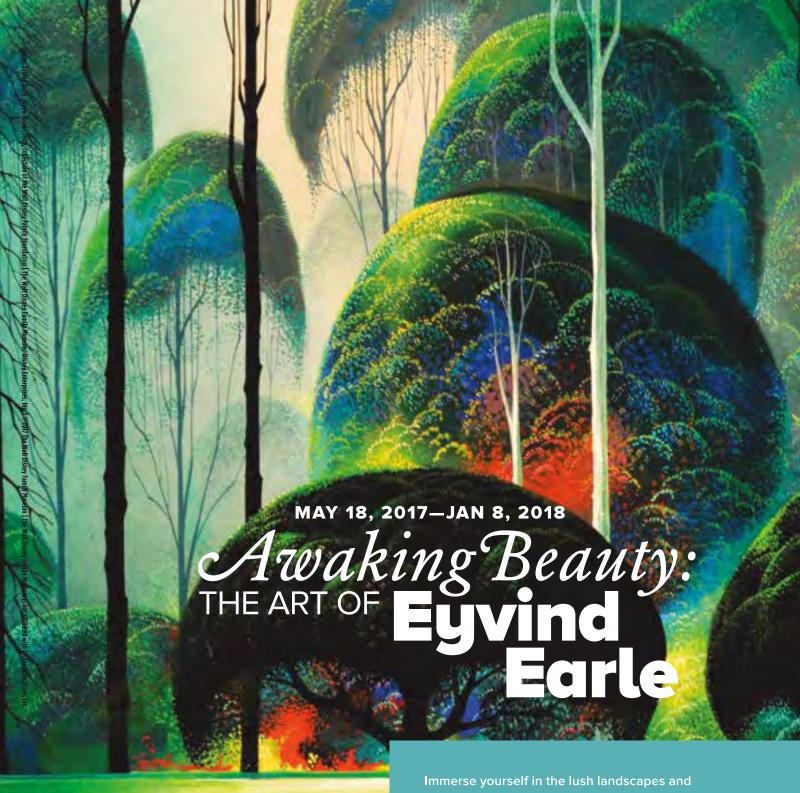
in 2013 with Les Contes d'Hoffmann. His work has most recently appeared in the Company's Aida, Madama Butterfly, Andrea Chénier, Dream of the Red Chamber, Carmen, Don Carlo, Jenufa, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Sweeney Todd, Luisa Miller, The Magic Flute, and Lucia di Lammermoor. Maier has directed fight scenes for American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 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.

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SUPERNUMERARIES

James Crow Steve Lavezzoli Carlos Suarez Rob Wonder Paul Zemlin



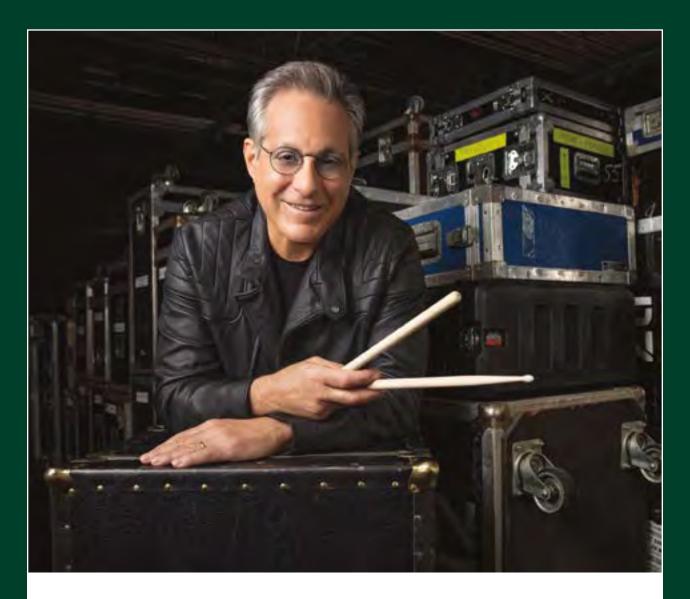
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Although the program magazines regularly list members of the administration and Company, we know that those lists are by necessity incomplete. To give recognition to the many skilled professionals whose work has contributed so greatly to the quality of San Francisco Opera productions, we provide once every year a list of everyone involved with our season.

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Sharif Cavil Mike Chapman

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Gabriel Eby Tony Garcia Jeff Hansen

Greg Harsha, Key Man (15)

Andrew Heron

David Heron Geoff R. Heron, Key Man

Geoffrey W. Heron, Key Man (20)

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Rigging and Automation Key (12) Ed Joe, Warehouse Foreman Nicholas Kukielka

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Paul Goetz, Systems Administrator
Steve Long, Network & Systems
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Porter Venn, Database Analyst

Sara Lee, Programmer/Analyst

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Valentina Simi, Artist Services Coordinator and Assistant to the Music Director

Manuela Galindo, Contracts and Accommodations Assistant

Michael Bragg, Music Planning Associate and Opera Librarian

Samuel J. Crawford, Opera Library
Associate

Jordi Bernàcer, Resident Conductor

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Jennifer Szeto, John Elam, Adler Fellows

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Chris Bragg, Administrative Director
Karen Jine, Company Manager
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César Ulloa, Master Voice Teacher

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Alyssa Stone, Community Programs

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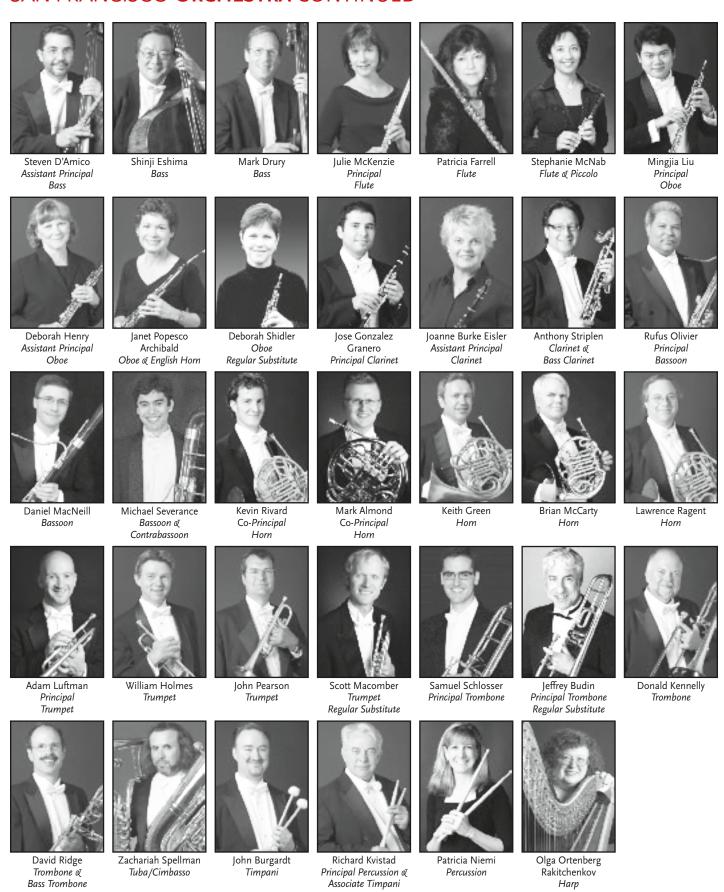


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Jonathan Lancelle , Associate Principal Bass

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Most photos by John Martin. Not pictured: Lev Rankov, First Violin and Peter Myers, Assistant Principal, Cello

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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



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Laurel Rice Mezzo-Soprano



Shelley Seitz Mezzo-Soprano



Claudia Siefer Mezzo-Soprano



Donna Turchi Mezzo-Soprano



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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

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Kristin Clayton
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Anthony Striplen

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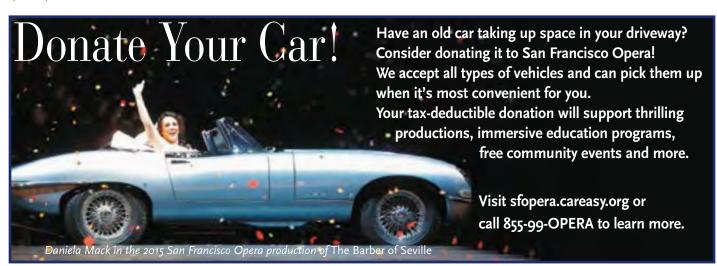
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