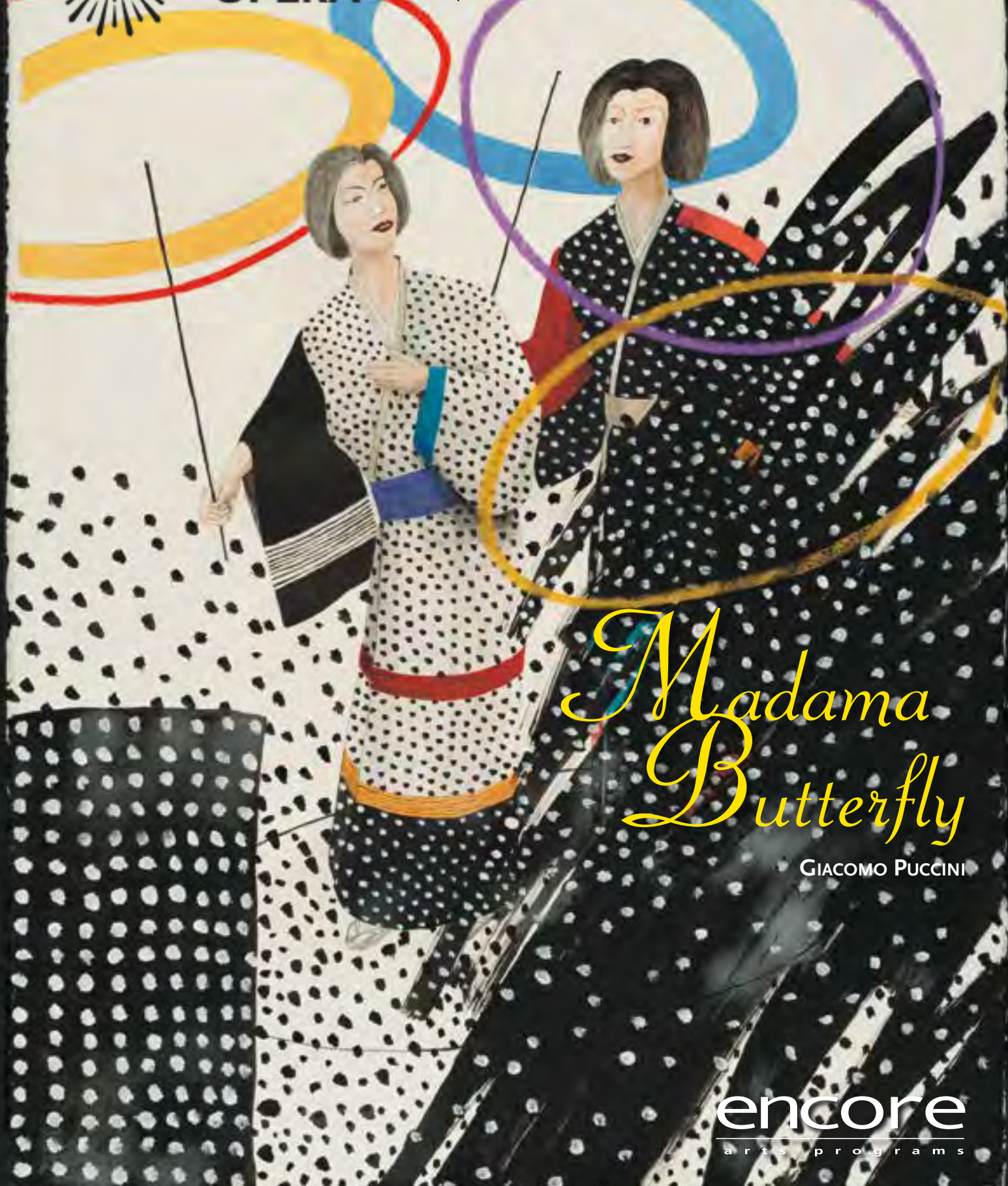




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*Madama
Butterfly*

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A MESSAGE FROM

THE BOARD OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

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



SCOTT WALL

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

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

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

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

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SF Opera Lab Readies for Season Two



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



Roomful of Teeth



STEFAN COHEN

2016 Adler Fellows
Zanda Švēde and Matthew Stump

Adler Fellows Perform in Gala Concert

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

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

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



ED ANDERSON

Notes from the General Director

Revisiting the Classics

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

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

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

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

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

—MATTHEW SHILVOCK



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

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES



Opera Shop Recommendations

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

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



CORY WEAVER

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

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Jane Mudge

New Leadership at Opera Guild

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

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

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA *Profile*

Mingjia Liu

San Francisco Opera Orchestra

Principal Oboe



CORY WEAVER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— JEFFERY McMILLAN

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BY STEVEN WINN

Meeting Matthew Shilvock

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



CORY WEAVER



CORY WEAVER



SCOTT WALL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

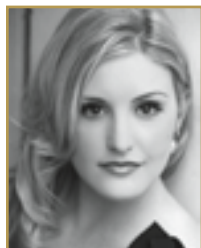
Shillock may be kidding himself a little. But as he knows perfectly well, San Francisco Opera's new general director has everyone's close attention. 🍷

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

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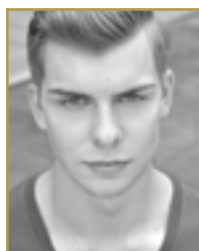
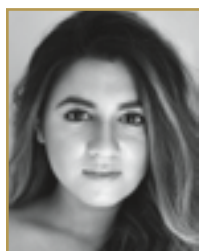
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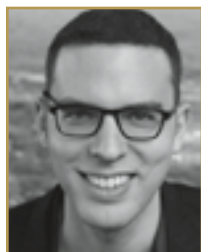
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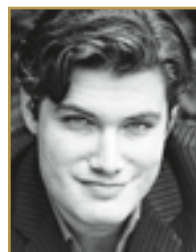


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IN MEMORIAM



BRIAN ASAWA, *Countertenor*

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



JOHAN BOTHA, *Tenor*

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



BEVERLEY DENEBEIM, *Philanthropist*

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



MATTIWILDA DOBBS, *Soprano*

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

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



DELIA FLEISHHACKER EHRLICH,
Philanthropist

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



BETTY GUY, *Artist*

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



HARRIET MEYER QUARRÉ,
Philanthropist

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



ROBERT ROBB, *Administration*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Aida: Marcia Green

Madame Butterfly: Peter Susskind

Rigoletto: Emily Laurance

Don Giovanni: Kayleen Asbo

La Bohème: Laura Prichard

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DREW ALTIZER





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

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

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

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John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn



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

In September 2008, the Gunns made a historic commitment—believed to be the largest gift ever made by individuals to an American opera company—to help fund the signature projects of General Director David Gockley, including new operas and productions, multimedia projects, and outreach programs. This season, the Gunns' inspired generosity is helping make possible four productions—*Andrea Chénier*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Aida*, and *Don Giovanni*.

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

John is the former chairman and CEO of Dodge & Cox

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

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

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

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

DREW ALITZER



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

“Without great singers, opera is not all it could be,” says San Francisco Opera board member Joan Traitel. “That’s why my husband and I approached David Gockley with the idea of creating a special way of supporting singers exclusively.” The result was the Great Singers Fund, inaugurated by the Traitels in 2008 to provide San Francisco Opera with enhanced support to attract the world’s best singers. Joan, a member of the Opera’s board of directors since 1998, and her husband David were production sponsors for several years before founding the Great Singers Fund. “The Fund makes a difference in the quality of opera in San Francisco,” Joan explains. When asked to name a favorite artist in the 2016–17 Season, Joan explains, “There are so many! We are thrilled to be supporting the return of Ekaterina Semenchuk and Lianna Haroutounian,

both superb talents. And we’re excited to hear the great George Gagnidze in a second production during his debut season with San Francisco Opera. I hope people see the relationship between the Great Singers Fund and this season’s fantastic lineup. Your support truly can make a difference! These amazing artists make an evening special, and at the end you walk away happy.”

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

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



DREW ALITZER



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

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Chevron (Production Sponsor, *Aida*)

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



Kaiser Permanente (Performance Sponsor, *Madame Butterfly*)

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

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

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KRISTEN LOKEN

Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem

As Jan Shrem explains, “For Maria, it is all about the artists. Though I had loved opera for years before I met her, it was Maria who opened my eyes to the dedication and sacrifice of the artists.” Last year, Jan and Maria significantly expanded their support of opera artists through the establishment of two new funds in addition to the *Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund*. The *Conductors Fund* helps ensure the continued appearances of Maestro Nicola Luisotti and other Italian conductors, and the *Emerging Stars Fund* helps bring some of opera’s most exciting rising young talents to the stage.

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

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

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

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

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



DREW ALTIZER



DREW ALTIZER

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

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

Join our family of donors and help us share the transformative power of opera with the widest possible audience. Your investment—of any size—delivers thrilling performances, immersive education programs, free community events and more. Plus, as a member you'll take part in unique experiences and enjoy exciting benefits while supporting the art form you love.



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DISCOVER THE MAGIC



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

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

BRAVO! CLUB



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

DISCOUNTED TICKETS

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

FREE ADMISSION

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

COMPLIMENTARY PRE-SHOW RECEPTIONS

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

EXCLUSIVE INVITES

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

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

For more information or to join:

sfopera.com/bravo

ORPHEUS



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

Join Orpheus and lead the next generation of opera supporters.

GREAT PERKS

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

MAXIMIZE YOUR IMPACT

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

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

For more information or to join:

Derek Jandu at (415) 565-6461 or djandu@sfopera.com

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2016–17 REPERTORY

ANDREA CHÉNIER

Umberto Giordano

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

Production made possible, in part, by:

Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey;

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

DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER

WORLD PREMIERE

Music by Bright Sheng

Libretto by David Henry Hwang and Bright Sheng

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

Production made possible, in part, by:

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn;

the Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund;

grants from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and

the National Endowment for the Arts;

OPERA America's Opera Fund; and United Airlines.

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

DON PASQUALE

Gaetano Donizetti

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

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

THE MAKROPULOS CASE

Leoš Janáček

October 14, 18, 23, 26, 29

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

The Thomas Tilton Production Fund. Original production made

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

AIDA

Giuseppe Verdi

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

Production sponsored, in part, by:

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

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

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Giacomo Puccini

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

Production made possible, in part, by

the Burgess & Elizabeth Jamieson Fund, and Kaiser Permanente.

RIGOLETTO

Giuseppe Verdi

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

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

DON GIOVANNI

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

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

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

LA BOHÈME

Giacomo Puccini

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

Production made possible, in part, by

the Burgess & Elizabeth Jamieson Fund.

Major support also provided by

The Great Singers Fund, established by Joan & David Traitel

The Conductors Fund, the Emerging Stars Fund, and

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Giacomo Puccini

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Matthew Shilvock,
General Director

Nicola Luisotti,
Music Director

Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair

This production is made possible, in part, by:
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Mr. Evans' and Mr. Costanzo's appearances are made possible
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MADAMA BUTTERFLY

ACT I

The marriage broker Goro shows Lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, U.S. Navy, the house that Pinkerton has rented to occupy with his bride-to-be, the geisha Cio-Cio-San (Butterfly). Soon they are joined by the U.S. Consul at Nagasaki, Sharpless. Pinkerton brags that his marriage contract is valid for 999 years but can be annulled at the end of each month. Sharpless tries to make the carefree lieutenant seriously consider the step he is about to take. Pinkerton asks Sharpless to join him in a series of toasts, among them one to the real wedding and the real American wife he will surely have one day. Just then, the voice of Butterfly is heard as she and her geisha friends ascend the hill. She is the happiest girl in Japan and comes to answer the summons of love. Butterfly talks of her unhappy family and tells Sharpless that at fifteen, she is already an old woman. She shows Pinkerton some of her possessions, among them the dagger with which her father had committed hara-kiri at the Mikado's orders. Butterfly tells Pinkerton that she is willing to give up her own gods and to adopt his Christian religion. The Imperial Commissioner and Official Registrar then perform the civil wedding ceremony. Sharpless leaves with a word of caution that he believes Butterfly is seriously in love, but Pinkerton has already turned to his new relatives, urging them to celebrate his happiness. Butterfly's uncle, the Bonze, a Shinto priest, arrives. He has heard that Butterfly has renounced her religion, and he calls all her relatives to renounce her. Pinkerton orders them away and then tries to comfort the weeping Butterfly. Smiling through her tears, she tells him that although everyone else has rejected her, she is happy only with Pinkerton. As night falls, Pinkerton realizes how much he loves Butterfly.

ACT II

Pinkerton has sailed away and three years have passed. Butterfly and her maid Suzuki are living in utter poverty in the house on the hill. Butterfly still believes that Pinkerton will return to her, as he promised, but Suzuki doubts it. Goro brings Sharpless to Butterfly to read her a letter from Pinkerton, but she insists on receiving him as an honored guest. Her hospitality interferes with his efforts to read the letter. They are joined by Goro's client, Prince Yamadori, who hopes to marry Butterfly. She brushes aside his offer, insisting that she is already married. Yamadori leaves and Sharpless at last produces his letter, but Butterfly is so carried

away by the thought that Pinkerton has written she fails to grasp the meaning of his words. Sharpless asks her what she would do if Pinkerton never came back. Become a geisha again, she answers—or better, die. Sharpless suggests she reconsider Yamadori's proposal, at which Butterfly goes out and returns with Pinkerton's child, whose name is "Sorrow." She assures Sharpless that Pinkerton would never abandon such a beautiful child. Moved, Sharpless promises to inform Pinkerton of his son and leaves. A cannon shot is heard and Butterfly takes up the telescope and recognizes Pinkerton's ship. Sure that her faith will be rewarded, Butterfly prepares for Pinkerton's arrival and she and Suzuki decorate the house with flowers. Butterfly, Suzuki, and the child wait and watch overnight for Pinkerton's return.

Morning comes and Butterfly carries the sleeping child off. Sharpless, Pinkerton, and an unknown American woman arrive in the garden, and Sharpless tells Suzuki that the woman is Pinkerton's new wife. Remorseful, Pinkerton flees, leaving Sharpless and Kate to confront Butterfly. She quickly realizes the reason for Pinkerton's visit: the couple has come to take the child away. Butterfly instructs them to return for the child in half an hour. She takes her father's dagger and is determined to end her life when Suzuki, in an attempt to stop Butterfly, pushes the child into the room. Butterfly hugs him close and then sends him out to play. Left alone, Butterfly performs ritual suicide.

First performance: Teatro alla Scala, Milan; February 17, 1904

First performance in the U.S.: Columbia Theater, Washington, D.C.; October 15, 1906

First San Francisco Opera performance: September 26, 1924

Madama Butterfly has been performed in 38 previous seasons at San Francisco Opera. For a complete record of all past casts, please visit archive.sfopera.com.

Personnel: 14 principals, 35 choristers, 4 kurogo*, 7 supernumeraries; **60 total.**

Orchestra: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes plus 1 English horn, 2 clarinets plus 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 cimbasso, 1 timpani, 3 percussion, 1 harp, 40 strings (12 first violins, 9 second violins, 7 violas, 7 cellos, 5 basses); **67 total.**

Backstage musicians: 1 tam-tam, 1 viola d'amore

* *Term for a black-clad stage assistant in traditional Japanese theater*

Conductor
Yves Abel
Jordi Bernàcer (12/4)

Director
Leslie Swackhamer

Production Designer
Jun Kaneko

Lighting Designer
Gary Marder

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Choreographer
Melissa Noble

Dance Master
Lawrence Pech

Fight Director
Dave Maier

Assistant Conductor
Joseph Marcheso

Musical Preparation
Maureen Zoltek, Tamara Sanikidze,
Jennifer Szeto †, **John Churchwell,**
Fabrizio Corona

Prompter
Dennis Doubin

Supertitles
Jerry Sherk, Francesca Zambello

Assistant Director
Morgan Robinson

Stage Manager
Gina Hays

Assistant Stage Managers
Andrew Landis, Sarah Bingel, E. Reed Fisher

Costume Supervisor
Kristi Johnson

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12 AT 7:30 PM
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15 AT 7:30 PM
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18 AT 7:30 PM
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22 AT 7:30 PM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26 AT 7:30 PM
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 AT 7:30 PM
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1 AT 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4 AT 2 PM

Opera in two acts by **Giacomo Puccini**
Libretto by **Luigi Illica** and **Giuseppe Giacosa**
Based on the works of **John Luther Long** and **David Belasco**

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

(Sung in Italian with English supertitles)

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton</i>	Vincenzo Costanzo*
<i>Goro</i>	Julius Ahn
<i>Suzuki</i>	Zanda Švēde †
<i>Sharpless</i>	Anthony Clark Evans*
<i>Cio-Cio-San (Madama Butterfly)</i>	Lianna Haroutounian
<i>The Imperial Commissioner</i>	Matthew Stump †
<i>The Official Registrar</i>	Jere Torkelsen
<i>Uncle Yakuside</i>	Christopher Jackson
<i>Cousin</i>	Virginia Pluth
<i>Mother</i>	Laurel Porter
<i>Aunt</i>	Janet Campbell
<i>The Bonze</i>	Raymond Aceto
<i>Prince Yamadori</i>	Edward Nelson †
<i>Sorrow (Cio-Cio-San's child)</i>	Ayla Cashman*
<i>Kate Pinkerton</i>	Julie Adams †
<i>Cio-Cio-San's relatives and friends</i>	

*San Francisco Opera debut †Current Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: Early 20th century, Nagasaki

ACT I: A house and garden overlooking the Bay of Nagasaki

—INTERMISSION—

ACT II: The same, three years later

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

The performance will last approximately two hours and fifty minutes.

Puccini's Theatrical Sensibility in

Madama Butterfly

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The reason why Puccini continues to occupy such a central position in the operatic repertory goes far beyond his gift for crafting indelible, pathos-charged melodies. These cast an irresistible spell over audiences, to be sure, but their effectiveness is ultimately rooted in the composer's remarkable instinct for the theater: in his skill at delineating character and situation through music and in his pacing of details as they build toward an inevitable climax.

It can hardly be a coincidence that the initial inspiration for two of his best-loved operas, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*, gripped Puccini during live experiences in the theater. In the summer of 1900, Puccini was in the middle of a six-week stay in London when he saw David Belasco's recent one-act play *Madame Butterfly* in the

West End. Despite Puccini's lack of English—reminiscent of his experience of Victorien Sardou's play *La Tosca*, which moved him even though he could not understand French—the immediate impression was overwhelming. Belasco himself later claimed that the composer had rushed backstage as soon as the curtain fell to meet him and requested rights to set the play as an opera. "I agreed at once," Belasco said, "because it was impossible to discuss arrangements with an impulsive Italian who has tears in his eyes and both arms around your neck."

As the new century rolled in, the fresh success of *Tosca* was securing a reputation for Puccini, then in his early forties, as the preeminent heir to Verdi. Yet Puccini was anxious to avoid retreading old ground. And a lingering sense of post-Wagnerian, *fin-de-*

siècle uncertainty—which was soon to help pave the way for musical modernism—made him all the more obsessive in his search for the right subject to pursue for his next opera.

But it was the story of *Butterfly* as encountered during that evening of theater in London that began to preoccupy his artistic imagination. In the months after seeing Belasco's play, Puccini continued to press his publisher, Giulio Ricordi, to secure the rights to develop it as an opera. This essential step—notwithstanding the playwright's colorful backstage anecdote—was protracted, in part because Belasco had adapted a pre-existing short story of the same name published in 1898 by Philadelphia-based lawyer John Luther Long and itself drawing on the autobiographical 1887 French novel *Madame Chrysanthème* by Pierre Loti. Much of the play's dialogue, which has *Butterfly* resort to a baby-like, pidgin English, was actually taken from Long, whose name is sometimes referred to as a co-author of the play. One significant change Belasco introduced, however, was *Butterfly*'s actual suicide. In Long's account, just as she attempts hara-kiri, "the little maid came in and bound up the wound," saving *Butterfly*.

"The more I think about *Butterfly*," wrote the composer in the meantime, "the more excited I become." At last, by the spring of 1901, the way was cleared for Puccini to enlist the same duo of librettists with whom he had so successfully collaborated for *La Bohème* and *Tosca*, his two preceding operas; *Madama Butterfly* marked the last time that all three worked together. The customary division of labor gave Luigi Illica the preliminary task of preparing the detailed scenario and a prose draft of the dialogue, while Giuseppe Giacosa, a renowned poet, was responsible for versifying the text.

Puccini, however, played a characteristically interventionist role in shaping the libretto, from initial conception through *Butterfly*'s numerous revisions. Indeed, the divergent angles from which the composer and his librettists approached the material helped generate some of the fundamental tensions that underlie the opera. Lt. B.F. Pinkerton's reprehensible behavior, for example, is difficult to square with the conventions of a lead operatic tenor role. Even more significantly, the actions of Cio-Cio-San and Pinkerton alike can be interpreted as unfolding across a spectrum that ranges, at one end, from an impersonal "culture clash" between East and West, with the protagonists engulfed in incompatible points of view, while the other traces a highly personal psychological drama of tragic disillusionment.

In his thought-provoking study of the opera's genesis and revisions, Arthur Groos suggests that the emphasis ultimately shifted toward the latter as *Madama Butterfly* evolved. Groos points out that the painfully ironic juxtaposition in Act

I, when Pinkerton toasts the "real" American wife with whom he wants to settle down just before the approach of *Butterfly* and her retinue, epitomizes "the fact that the tragedy no longer lies exclusively in a clash of cultures, but also in a contradiction between the principals' fantasies about each other and reality. Pinkerton's adventurism has brought about this mock relationship; and *Butterfly*'s trusting heart will embellish it." Pinkerton's impetuous ode to enjoying the moment with his new Japanese bride, regardless of the consequences—"Amore o grillo" ("True love or fancy")—represents in microcosm this contradiction at the heart of the opera.

As mentioned, Puccini was initially attracted to the theatrical version of the story conveyed by the one-act by David Belasco (1853–1931). Born in San Francisco to parents of Sephardic heritage, Belasco—known for his signature outfits of clerical black—had established himself as a trend-setting producer, director, and playwright. His meticulous attention to detail and to naturalistic ambience left a powerful stamp on American theater of the time. His plays would later incorporate influences from the emerging art of cinema and served as the basis for numerous film adaptations. (A young Cary Grant appeared as Pinkerton in the posthumous Hollywood version of his *Madame Butterfly* in 1932.)

Belasco originally staged *Madame Butterfly* as a star vehicle for the same actress, Blanche Bates, for whom he later wrote *The Girl of the Golden West* (which in turn served as the source for Puccini's subsequent opera, *La Fanciulla del West*). He also used *Butterfly* to introduce one of his more daring experiments in lighting design, another area in which Belasco proved to be an especially innovative figure. Belasco dramatized Cio-Cio-San's all-night vigil, in which she waits for Pinkerton to climb the hill and return to reclaim her, as a



Left: Italian soprano Rosina Storchio was the first Cio-Cio-San, appearing in the ill-fated 1904 premiere of *Madama Butterfly* at Milan's Teatro alla Scala.

Right: An undated photo of David Belasco, the author of the one-act play *Madame Butterfly*. Born in San Francisco to parents of Sephardic heritage, Belasco was known for his signature outfits of clerical black.

Below: A poster from Ricordi, Puccini's publisher. Ricordi expressed misgivings about the *Madama Butterfly* project from the onset.

Right: *The Act I Love Duet* as seen in Jun Kaneko's 2014 production of *Madama Butterfly* at San Francisco Opera.

Far right: Soprano Patricia Racette was Cio-Cio-San for the Company's 2014 presentation.

DE AGOSTINI PICTURE LIBRARY / A. DAGLI ORTI / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES



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wordless scene lasting an astonishing quarter hour, with gradual changes in the lighting to indicate the transition from night to a hope-filled dawn accompanied by chattering birdsong.

Clearly this scenic tour de force left a lasting impression on Puccini, who wanted the opera's denouement to replicate—with tragic irony—the sense of inevitable momentum encapsulated in this natural shift from dusk to dawn: “No entr’acte, and arrive at the end keeping the public nailed to their seats for an hour and a half! It’s extraordinary, but it’s the lifeblood of the opera.” Puccini later acceded to the suggestion to add an interval within the second part, placed between the vigil and Butterfly’s final day (hence the division into acts two and three which is sometimes encountered in stagings of *Madama Butterfly*). San Francisco Opera’s current production, however, reverts to the composer’s original desire to present the second part without interruption. The music corresponding to Belasco’s staged vigil is in two parts. First is the wordless “Humming Chorus” (for sopranos and tenors alone), whose material is taken from the accompaniment to which Sharpless had futilely attempted to read Pinkerton’s letter but which now infuses Cio-Cio-San’s steadfast illusion of love with a radiant, simple dignity. The second is a symphonic intermezzo that reworks several of the opera’s motifs in a kind of stream of consciousness depicting the heroine’s meditations before the music brightens with the promise of the new day.

Crucial as Belasco’s version of the story was for him, however, Puccini was not interested in merely “translating” it into operatic terms. He determined early on to counterbalance the play—which

corresponds to the opera’s second act—with a preliminary act to establish the background of the marriage and to highlight the contrast between the American and Japanese perspectives. (Puccini initially even suggested setting Act I in North America.)

For his initial draft of the proposed first act, Illica harvested material from Long and Loti, including a sequence of caricature-like depictions of Cio-Cio-San’s boorish relatives during the wedding ceremony. Pinkerton expressed an arrogant disdain for the Japanese milieu, comparing his new acquaintances to insects and mocking the wedding refreshments as “candied flies and spiders, julep nests.” Most of this material was eventually deleted as Puccini, over several revivals, continued to revise the score into its best-known form. Adherents of the original version—which has seen several revivals over the last few decades—find its distinctly less-sympathetic Pinkerton to represent a more “radical” challenge to operatic convention, while his softening as the opera was revised marks a concession to “bourgeois” tastes that would prefer not to be confronted by the ugliness of imperialist attitudes.

By the same token, Puccini agreed to a set of revisions that French impresario Albert Carré stipulated for the Paris production given in December 1906 (which became the basis for the final published version of the score). Most significantly, Carré attenuated Kate Pinkerton’s role so that she becomes less insensitive to Butterfly’s plight. Instead of highlighting yet again the gulf between these two cultures, her brief, subdued appearance represents the critical turning point when Cio-Cio-San’s illusion must yield to reality.



CORY WEAVER

One arguable exception to this process of theatrical fine-tuning—besides the matter of the interval later inserted into part two—involves the short exit aria Puccini and his librettists gave to Pinkerton (“Addio, fiorito asil”) after the opera’s notoriously disastrous premiere at Milan’s La Scala on February 17, 1904. *Madama Butterfly* shares with *The Barber of Seville* and *La Traviata* the dubious distinction of having been jeered by its first audience as an utter fiasco. Yet his confidence remained unshaken. A revised version of *Madama Butterfly*, including Pinkerton’s added aria and some cuts to the first-act caricatures, proved a complete triumph when it was unveiled at Brescia a mere three months later.

Some commentators continue to view “Addio, fiorito asil” as a mere concession to make Pinkerton less odious. The idea for just such a number, however, had already been floated by Giacosa before the premiere. The poet countered Puccini’s rejection of this as an interruption of the dramatic momentum by drawing a parallel with a similar moment of lyrical pause just after Cavaradossi learns from Tosca of his supposed liberation. As it now occurs, the aria reaffirms the opera’s recurrent theme of willful illusion. Pinkerton’s sudden acknowledgment of what has guided his behavior entails a tragic echo of the luminous love music of the first act. The very rapture of that extended scene had lent his feelings a persuasive veneer of sincerity. Moreover, Puccini undercuts Pinkerton’s heroic lyricism with tattered, disruptive fragments of the “Star-Spangled Banner” leitmotif which is associated with his “facile creed” as the “Yankee vagabond.”

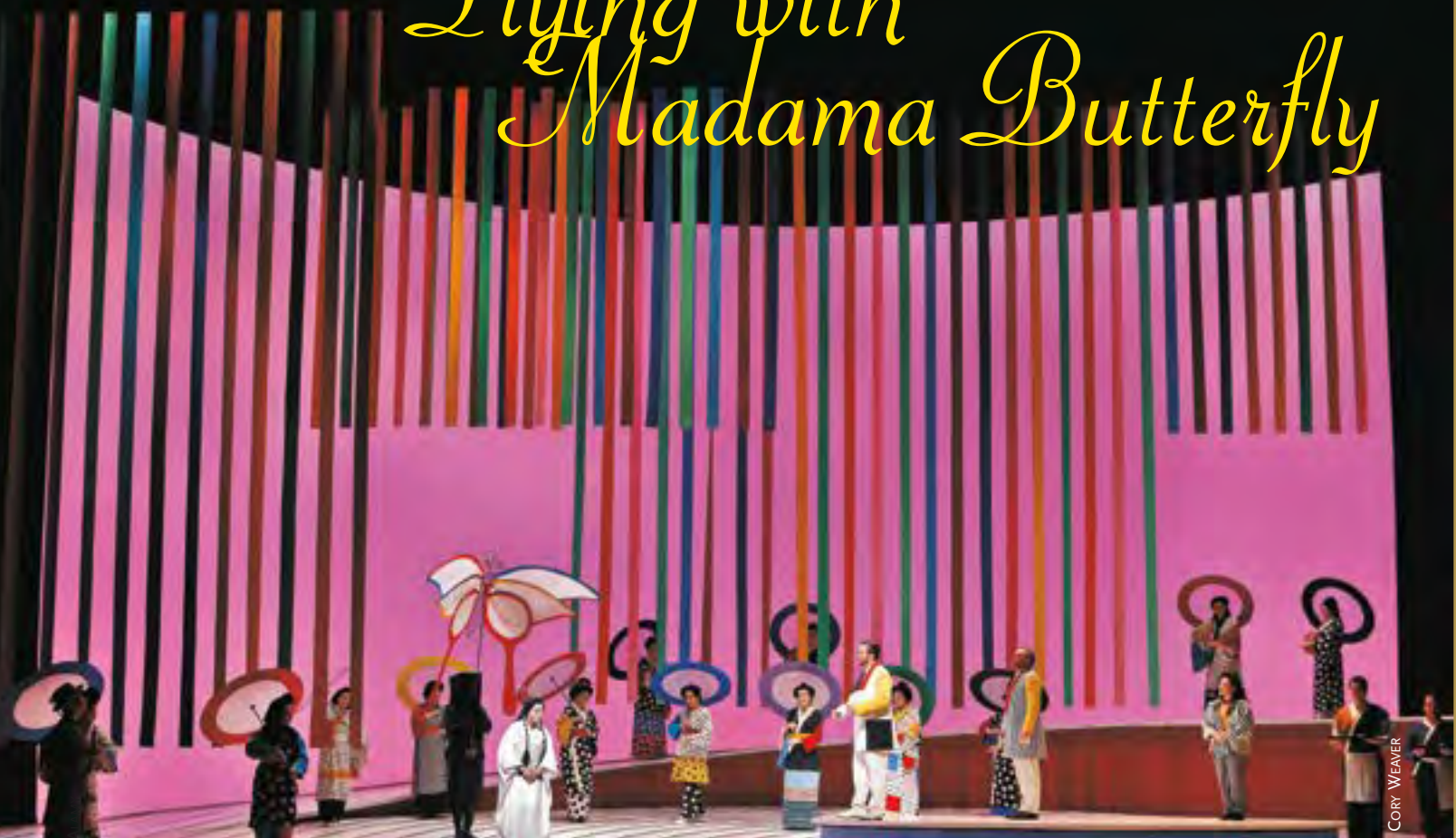
Puccini’s musical strategy repeatedly plays up ironic parallels

between the opera’s first and second parts. Both, for example, begin with brief fugato preludes: the first, bustling with a scherzo-like, comic energy, the second hollow and wraithlike. The first act builds in anticipation of the appearance of Cio-Cio-San, who is first viewed in the context of her relatives before she is outcast and left alone with Pinkerton; in the second, she in turn awaits Pinkerton. Reality, though, collides with fantasy in each case.

Ricordi, Puccini’s publisher, expressed misgivings about the *Madama Butterfly* project from the onset, finding the story itself to be nothing more than an insipid tearjerker unworthy of the composer—a verdict repeated frequently ever since. Yet for Puccini, the source material offered a way to sharpen his theatrical instincts while expanding his orchestral palette and refining his command of a coherent, psychologically involving, post-Wagnerian leitmotif system. As biographer Julian Budden suggests, *Butterfly* moreover allowed Puccini to synthesize the poetic ambience of *La Bohème* with the relentless, violent theatrical force of *Tosca* while sustaining greater and more-prismatic focus on his tragic heroine than he had ever attempted before. According to the composer’s own view, as he defied the humiliation of that opening night in Milan, “My *Butterfly* remains as it is: the most heartfelt and evocative opera I have ever conceived!”

Thomas May is a longtime contributor to San Francisco Opera Magazine and the author of Decoding Wagner: An Invitation to His World of Music Drama. This essay was published in a previous edition of San Francisco Opera Magazine.

Flying with Madama Butterfly



CORY WEAVER

One sunny afternoon in early spring 2003, I received an invitation to fly with *Madama Butterfly*. After a few months of consideration, I accepted and my journey designing scenery and costumes for Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* began.

I set out in a fog on August 3, 2003. Knowing nothing about opera production, this is how I felt, like I was moving through a heavy fog. I did as much research and random conceptual drawing as possible, and within a year I attended seven different productions of *Butterfly* across the continental U.S. Slowly the fog began to open up, and I saw some interesting conceptual directions for the opera's design.

One of the most difficult aspects of the opera for a person more familiar with sculpture and painting, which do not traditionally move around during an exhibition, is that nothing stays the same. There is constant movement in the music, singers' positions on the stage, and vivid lighting variations. All of these elements have to make great sense together in each moment of the performance.

Shortly after I started to develop the costumes, I realized that working on the scenery and costumes simultaneously would make better sense for the total artistic vision, keeping my focus on

the unity of the music, singers' voices, lighting design, and the interpretation of the artistic and stage directors.

This complex collaboration with everyone involved in the production is the total opposite of my familiar experiences as an individual studio artist. It is a new challenge in making an artistic statement for me, full of unknowns.

Several months into the process, I began to have a good understanding of telling *Madama Butterfly*'s story and the director's concept for the singers' movement on stage. This was a great turning point for me and afterwards everything started to fall into position. The design's conceptual complexity was completed by the final addition of video projections. Images moving and fading in and out gave me the opportunity to orchestrate the element of time visually on stage.

Madama Butterfly has been one of the most difficult challenges and one of the most exciting creative experiences I have had in my life. Maybe I was lucky that I did not have any prior knowledge of opera production. If you have no idea, you have no fear.

I was also fortunate to have an exceptional team with which to collaborate. I have no doubt that the success of my endeavors would not be possible without having had help from this great group of people. Thank you all for giving me this fantastic opportunity to learn additional possibilities in creativity. 🌸

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Photos: Courtesy of Iron Eye Art Group; Rigoletto, Don Giovanni, La Bohème/San Francisco Opera/Cory Weaver

Past Casts at San Francisco Opera

Madama Butterfly

In 1966, soprano Teresa Stratas shared the role of Butterfly with Dorothy Kirsten.



ROBERT CAHEN



Soprano Licia Albanese performed the role of Cio-Cio-San for the Company's 1953 production.



Sandor Konya as Pinkerton and Leontyne Price as Butterfly, from 1961.



KEN FRIEDMAN

The USS Abraham Lincoln looms over the Flower Duet of soprano Verónica Villarroel (Cio-Cio-San) and mezzo-soprano Catherine Cook (Suzuki) in 2003.



RON SCHERL

Japanese soprano Yasuko Hayashi as Cio-Cio-San and Kahlila Kramer as her son, named "Trouble" in 1980.

Mezzo-soprano Zheng Cao was beloved for her signature role, the loyal servant Suzuki. In 2006 and 2007, Cao performed alongside soprano Patricia Racette who sang Butterfly.



TERRENCE MCCARTHY

From December 1995, Yoko Watanabe as Cio-Cio-San and Theodore Baerg as Sharpless.



MARTY SOHL



In October 1995, Philip Skinner was the Bonze, and Catherine Malfitano Madama Butterfly.

MARTY SOHL

Butterfly, Pinkerton, and all her relatives assemble for the wedding, as captured here in 1999.

MARTY SOHL



As seen in the Company's 2010 production, Pinkerton (tenor Stefano Secco) meets Goro (tenor Thomas Glenn), who can arrange for everything—and everyone.



CORY WEAVER

ARTIST PROFILES



YVES ABEL
(Toronto, Canada)

Conductor
Franco-Canadian conductor Yves Abel made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1996 conducting *Hamlet*.

He was principal guest conductor of Deutsche Oper Berlin from 2005 through 2011 and has been chief conductor of the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie since 2015. A frequent guest with the world's great opera companies, Yves Abel has conducted performances at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Teatro alla Scala, Milan; the Metropolitan Opera; Lyric Opera of Chicago; Seattle Opera; Glyndebourne Festival; Bavarian State Opera; Opéra National de Paris; Netherlands Opera; Grand Théâtre de Genève; Teatro San Carlo, Naples; Teatro Communale Bologna; New National Theatre, Tokyo; Welsh National Opera; and Opera North. He has conducted new productions in Vienna (*La Fille du Régiment*), in Munich (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*), Geneva (*Les Vêpres Siciliennes*), Barcelona (*Madama Butterfly*), Bilbao (*Norma*), Toulouse (Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Lisbon (*Il Turco in Italia*), Naples (*Faust*), Dallas (*Ermione*), Seattle (*Il Trovatore* and Heggie's *The End of the Affair*), Monte Carlo (*Il Turco in Italia*) and Santa Fe (*Così fan tutte*), and at the festivals of Pesaro, Caramoor, the Menuhin Festival in Gstaad, and the Spoleto Festival in Charleston and Spoleto, Italy. His recordings include *Romantique* with mezzo-soprano Elīna Garanča for Deutsche Grammophon. In 2009 Abel was awarded the title Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.



JORDI BERNÀCER
(Alcoi, Spain)

Conductor
Spanish conductor Jordi Bernàcer joined the Company in August 2015. As resident conductor, he serves as musical

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

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



LIANNA HAROUTOUNIAN
(Yerevan, Armenia)

Cio-Cio-San
Soprano Lianna Haroutounian made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2014 in the title role

of *Tosca*. Along with recent triumphs as Leonora in *Il Trovatore* at London's Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra* at the Metropolitan Opera, Haroutounian's Cio-Cio-San at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam earlier this year was widely praised by audiences and critics. Her other operatic appearances have included Héléne (*Les Vêpres Siciliennes*) at Covent Garden, Frankfurt Opera, and in Bilbao and Athens; Leonora in Marseilles; Amelia (*Un Ballo in Maschera*) in Bern and Tours; Marguerite (*Faust*) at the Opéra de Massy; Salud (*La Vida Breve*) in Toledo and Alicante, Spain; Desdemona (*Otello*) at Paris' Opéra Bastille; and the title roles of *La Traviata* and *Madama Butterfly* in Sanxay. Among her awards are a special prize at the sixth Giacomo Aragall International Singing Competition in Spain, first prize at the Arlesian Lyrical Forum in France, first prize at the Riviera Adriatica Competition, and finalist at the Busetto International Singing Competition. Previously, she made her triumphant debut at Covent Garden, stepping in at late notice to sing Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* under the baton of Antonio Pappano. She returns to Covent Garden this season to perform Leonora in *Il Trovatore*. Other upcoming engagements include Cio-Cio-San in Hamburg and Seattle and Amelia at the Concertgebouw.



VINCENZO COSTANZO
(Naples, Italy)

Lt. B. F. Pinkerton
Making his first operatic appearance in the United States, Italian tenor Vincenzo

Costanzo has performed the role of Lt. B. F. Pinkerton in many of Italy's opera houses, including La Fenice in Venice, Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, and in Florence, Modena, Piacenza, and Salerno. Costanzo has had a fast-rising international career and has worked with many distinguished conductors and directors, such as Daniel Oren, Myung-whun Chung, Franco Zeffirelli, and Liliana Cavani. He recently performed to great success Malcolm in *Macbeth* at the Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam; Rodolfo in *Luisa Miller* at Madrid's Teatro Real; the title role of *Nabucco* at the Reggia di Caserta; and Alfredo at the AIDS Gala at Deutsche Oper Berlin. Costanzo's future engagements include Malcolm in Madrid; Pinkerton in Madrid and Venice; Ruggero in *La Rondine* in Berlin; Macduff in *Macbeth* in Palermo; and, in Salzburg, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*.



ZANDA ŠVĒDE
(Valmiera, Latvia)

Suzuki
Latvian mezzo-soprano Zanda Švēde is currently a third-year Adler Fellow who made her San Francisco

Opera debut in 2014 as Flora Bervoix in *La Traviata*. She has also appeared with the Company as a Cleaning Woman and Chambermaid in *The Makropulos Case*, Solo Maid and Lady-in-Waiting/Flower in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the Mayor's Wife in *Jenůfa*, Lena in the world premiere of Marco Tutino's *Two Women*, Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, and Tisbe in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. Last season, Švēde made her role and house debuts in the title role of *Carmen* at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, as well as her role and house debuts as Olga in a concert performance of *Eugene Onegin* at North Carolina Opera. Last summer, she debuted with the San Francisco Symphony in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Additional

engagements included her debut at Palm Beach Opera as Suzuki, María in Piazzolla's *María de Buenos Aires*, Endimione in *La Calisto*, and the title role of Massenet's *Cléopâtre*. A participant of the 2013 Merola Opera Program, Švède will perform later this season as Maddalena in the Company's *Rigoletto*.



ANTHONY CLARK EVANS

(Elizabethtown, Kentucky)
Sharpless
American baritone Anthony Clark Evans is making his San Francisco

Opera debut as Sharpless. He recently completed a two-year tenure at Lyric Opera of Chicago's prestigious Ryan Opera Center where he was heard as Montano in *Otello* for his debut with the company, Prince Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly*, the Jailer in *Tosca*, the Servant in *Capriccio*, and the Commissario in *La Traviata*. Last season he returned to Lyric Opera of Chicago to create the role of Simon Thibault in the world premiere of *Bel Canto*, adapted from Ann Patchett's bestselling novel into an opera by composer Jimmy Lopez and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Nilo Cruz, and made debuts with San Diego Opera as Sharpless and with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Marcello in *La Bohème*. Recent concert engagements include Faure's Requiem with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and his Ravinia Festival debut singing in Bernstein's *Songfest* with Ensemble dal Niente. Later this season, he makes his Metropolitan Opera debut as the Huntsman in *Rusalka*.



JULIUS AHN
(Seoul, South Korea)
Goro

Korean-American tenor Julius Ahn returns to San Francisco Opera to reprise a role that he made his

Company debut with in 2014 and which has become a signature in his repertoire, having performed Goro with Palm Beach Opera, Opera Carolina, Nashville Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Michigan Opera Theatre, and Vancouver Opera. Ahn opened the 2016–17 season by making his debut with Opera Philadelphia

as Pang in *Turandot*, a role he has also performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Utah Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, and Cincinnati Opera. Also, as part of the 2016-2017 season, Ahn will reprise Pang in two additional company debuts with Pittsburgh Opera and Atlanta Opera. Additional notable engagements include various roles in *The Nose* with the Metropolitan Opera and Opera Boston; Tanzmeister and Brighella in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Boston Lyric Opera; Sellem in *The Rake's Progress* with the Princeton Festival; and Monostatos in *The Magic Flute* with Opera Carolina and Opera Omaha.



RAYMOND ACETO
(Cleveland, Ohio)

The Bonze
Bass Raymond Aceto made his debut with San Francisco Opera in 1997 as Monterone in *Rigoletto* and has returned as

Banquo in *Macbeth*, the King of Egypt in *Aida*, Hunding in *Die Walküre*, Timur in *Turandot*, and Reverend Olin Bitch in *Susannah*, among other roles. He has also appeared frequently with the Metropolitan Opera, most recently as Zaccaria in *Nabucco*, the King of Egypt, Il Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. Last season saw Aceto return to the Dallas Opera as Scarpia in *Tosca*, followed by his Opera Australia debut as Walter in *Luisa Miller*, Hunding at Washington National Opera, performances of Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied* with Jaap van Zweden and the Dallas Symphony, and the roles of Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette* and Ashby in *La Fanciulla del West* at Santa Fe Opera. Aceto is also in demand as a concert artist, including recent appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra under the baton of Franz Welser-Möst in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Verdi Requiem, and with the San Francisco Symphony in Mahler's Eighth Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Also this season, he appears as Ramfis in the Company's *Aida* and as Méphistophélès in New Orleans Opera's production of *Faust*.



EDWARD NELSON
(Santa Clarita, California)

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

2014 Merola Opera Program where he sang the title role of *Don Giovanni*. For San Francisco Opera, he was most recently Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* and Fléville in *Andrea Chénier*. Nelson created the role of John Buckley in the 2015 world premiere of Marco Tutino's *Two Women*, and he appeared during the 2015–16 Season as the Second Priest in *The Magic Flute*, Hermann Ortel in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Fiorello in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, L'Ami in Debussy's *La Chute de la Maison Usher*, and Moralès in *Carmen*. Other recent engagements include the Ferryman in Britten's *Curlew River* with the Mark Morris Dance Group/Tanglewood Music Festival and Montreal's Ballet-Opéra-Pantomime, as well as the title role of Britten's *Owen Wingrave*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, and Le Podestat in Bizet's *Le Docteur Miracle* with the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) where he holds undergraduate and graduate degrees. After completing the Adler Fellowship, Nelson's 2017 engagements include the role of Steward in Jonathan Dove's *Flight* with Opera Omaha, Schauard in *La Bohème* with Cincinnati Opera, and the title role in Thomas Ambroise's *Hamlet* with West Edge Opera.



JULIE ADAMS
(Burbank, California)
Kate Pinkerton

A second-year Adler Fellow, Julie Adams made her Company debut as Mimi in San Francisco Opera's *La Bohème for Families*

and most recently appeared as First Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Karolka in *Jenůfa*, and Kristina in *The Makropulos Case*. She is a winner of the 2015 Elizabeth Connell prize for aspiring dramatic sopranos, 2015 Sarah Tucker Study Grant, and the 2014 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. She participated in the 2014 Merola Opera Program, where she performed the role of Blanche DuBois

in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. During her studies with César Ulloa at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, she sang the roles of Blanche in *Les Dialogues des Carmélites*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. Later this season at San Francisco Opera, Adams performs as Mimì in *La Bohème*.



MATTHEW STUMP
(Goshen, Indiana)
**Imperial
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Bass-baritone
Matthew Stump is a second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and

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



JERE TORKESEN
(Lincoln, Nebraska)
Official Registrar
Baritone Jere Torkelsen has been a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus since 1987.

During his tenure he has performed an array of roles in *Tristan und Isolde*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Alcina*, *Appomattox*, *Tosca*, and, most recently, in *Susannah*, *Les Troyens*, and *Sweeney Todd*. He has appeared with regional opera companies as Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and the Four Villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. His concert performances include Beethoven's Ninth Symphony,

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LAUREL PORTER

(Hopkins, Minnesota)

Mother

A member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, mezzo-soprano Laurel Porter made her solo debut with the Company in the 2013 world premiere of *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* and appeared last season as the Apprentice in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and as a member of the Quintet and Ensemble in *Sweeney Todd*. She has performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Glimmerglass Festival, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Chicago Opera Theater, Sarasota Opera, Utah Festival Opera, and Virginia Opera. Roles in her repertoire include Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, and the title roles of *La Cenerentola* and *Ariodante*.



VIRGINIA PLUTH

(San Leandro, California)

Cousin

Soprano Virginia Pluth reprises the role of the Cousin in *Madama Butterfly* that she performed with the Company in 2014. As a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus for 28 seasons, Pluth created the role of a Civil Rights Marcher in *Appomattox* in 2007 and has performed numerous solo roles with the Company, including the Madrigalist in *Manon Lescaut*, Lolette in *La Rondine*, Suzanne in *Louise*, Sarah in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, and a member of the ensemble in *Sweeney Todd*. Her repertoire includes the title role of *Cenerentola*, Fiordiligi and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Micaela in *Carmen*, Anne Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*.



JANET CAMPBELL

(Dix Hill, New York)

Aunt

Mezzo-soprano Janet Campbell has been a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus since 2009. In 2014 she performed the same role of the Aunt in *Madama Butterfly* for the Company and appeared as Dolly in *Show Boat*. Recent solo engagements include Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Fidalma in *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Siebel in *Faust*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Arsamene in *Xerxes*, the Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitor*, and the title role of *La Cenerentola*. She regularly performs with Bay Area choral ensembles.



CHRISTOPHER JACKSON

(Buffalo, New York)

Uncle Yakuside

A member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, tenor Christopher Jackson made his Company debut in 2009 as the Pony Express Rider in *La Fanciulla del West* and has appeared in solo roles in thirteen other Company productions, including as Jeppo Liverotto in *Lucrezia Borgia* and a Backwoodsman in *Show Boat*. Career highlights include several roles at New York City Opera, including Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Calaf in *Turandot* with New York Grand Opera, Don José in *Carmen* with Anchorage Opera, and concert performances at Carnegie Hall.



LESLIE SWACKHAMER

(Bradenton, Florida)

Director

Director Leslie Swackhamer made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2014 with this same production of *Madama Butterfly*. Other opera companies where she has directed include Vancouver Opera, Opera Carolina, Seattle Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Omaha, Madison Opera, Dayton Opera, and Opera in the Heights. In 2017, she will add the

Washington National Opera at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to this list. She is currently working with composer Sheila Silver, librettist Stephen Kitsakis, and conductor Sara Jobin on the development of a new opera based on Khaled Hosseini's international best-selling novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. A passionate advocate of new work and work by women, Swackhamer is the executive director of the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the oldest and largest international prize specifically recognizing women playwrights. She is also a founder of the Women Playwrights Festival in Seattle. Swackhamer has led new play development initiatives at the Cleveland Play House and ACT Theatre (Seattle), and was awarded the 2015 Best Director by the Houston Press for her work on *Marie Antoinette*.



JUN KANEKO

(Nagoya, Japan)

Production Designer

Jun Kaneko made his San Francisco Opera debut with his production of *The Magic Flute* in 2012. Kaneko studied painting in his native Japan with Satoshi Ogawa during his adolescence. He came to the United States in 1963 to continue his studies at the Chouinard Institute of Art when his introduction to Fred Marer drew him to sculptural ceramics. Kaneko has taught at some of the nation's leading art schools, including Scripps College, Rhode Island School of Design, and Cranbrook Academy of Art. His ceramic, bronze, and glass sculptural work and two-dimensional artwork appears in numerous international solo and group exhibitions annually and is included in approximately fifty museum collections. He has realized almost thirty public art commissions in the United States and Japan, and he has been honored with national, state, and organization fellowships and an honorary doctorate from the Royal College of Art in London. Kaneko established his current studio in Omaha, Nebraska in 1990. The artist's first opera production, *Madama Butterfly*, was created in 2007 for Opera Omaha. Upon its premiere it garnered rave reviews, and the production has toured the country, including at San Francisco Opera in 2014. Kaneko was commissioned by Opera Philadelphia

to design a production of *Fidelio*, which received its premiere in 2008.



GARY MARDER
(San Diego, California)
Lighting Designer
Resident lighting designer for San Francisco Opera, Gary Marder made his Company debut with

Mefistofele in 2013 and his lighting designs most recently appeared in the Company's *Luisa Miller*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Carmen*, *Don Carlo*, *Jenůfa*, and *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Marder's other work includes *The Magic Flute* in Sydney; *La Traviata* at Turin's Teatro Regio as well as in Tokyo; *The Makropulos Case* and *Samson et Dalila* at Houston Grand Opera; and *Samson et Dalila*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Carmen*, *Peter Grimes*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and *Norma* at San Diego Opera. Marder previously served as assistant resident lighting designer for the Metropolitan Opera for twelve seasons and associate resident lighting designer at New York City Opera for five years. His work will also appear in the Company's upcoming productions of *Rigoletto* and *Don Giovanni*.



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.



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MELISSA NOBLE
(Houston, Texas)
Choreographer
Melissa Noble made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2014 with this same production of *Madama Butterfly*,

which she also choreographed at Opera Omaha, Opera Carolina, and Madison Opera. She has danced and collaborated with a number of dance and theater companies, including the Robert Davidson Dance Company, Aero-Betty, ARC Dance, Crispin Spaeth Dance, and the Pacific Performance Project, among many others. Noble is a current member of the faculty at the University of Houston, as well as the Houston Grand Opera Studio and Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. She has served as a faculty member at the University of Washington, Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, and Juniata College. Her choreography has also been seen in the Jacobs School of Music's productions of *Die Fledermaus* and *The Magic Flute*. Noble's training in Japanese movement began with AC Peterson Dance in Seattle, studying tea ceremony. She then studied the Suzuki method of Tadashi Suzuki and Slow Tempo created by Shogo Ohta.

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Laura Albers
Associate Concertmaster



Heidi Wilcox
Assistant Concertmaster



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First Violin



Dawn Harms
First Violin



Mariya Borozina
First Violin



Barbara Riccardi
First Violin



Leonid Igudesman
First Violin



Asuka Annie Yano
First Violin



Wenyi Shih
First Violin
Regular Substitute



Robin Hansen
First Violin
Regular Substitute



Jeremy Preston
Principal
Second Violin



Martha Simonds
Associate Principal
Second Violin



Beni Shinohara
Assistant Principal
Second Violin



Eva Karasik
Second Violin



Leslie Ludena
Second Violin



Linda Deutsch
Second Violin



Craig Reiss
Second Violin



Joseph Edelberg
Second Violin
Regular Substitute



Marianne Wagner
Second Violin
Regular Substitute



Carla Maria Rodrigues
Principal
Viola



Sergey Rakitchenkov
Associate Principal
Viola



Paul Nahhas
Assistant Principal
Viola



Patricia Heller
Viola



Jonna Hervig
Viola



Natalia Vershilova
Viola



Joy Fellows
Viola



David Kadarauich
Principal
Cello



Thalia Moore
Associate Principal
Cello



Nora Pirquet
Acting Assistant
Principal, Cello



Emil Miland
Cello



Victoria Ehrlich
Cello



Ruth Lane
Cello



Eric Sung
Cello
Regular Substitute



Joseph Lescher
Principal
Bass

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Jonathan Lancelle
Associate Principal
Bass



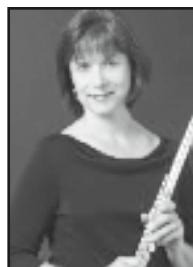
Steven D'Amico
Assistant Principal
Bass



Shinji Eshima
Bass



Mark Drury
Bass



Julie McKenzie
Principal
Flute



Patricia Farrell
Flute



Stephanie McNab
Flute & Piccolo



Mingjia Liu
Principal
Oboe



Deborah Henry
Assistant Principal
Oboe



Janet Popesco
Archibald
Oboe & English Horn



Deborah Shidler
Oboe
Regular Substitute



Jose Gonzalez
Granero
Principal Clarinet



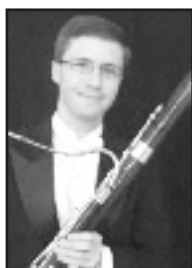
Joanne Burke Eisler
Assistant Principal
Clarinet



Anthony Striplen
Clarinet &
Bass Clarinet



Rufus Olivier
Principal
Bassoon



Daniel MacNeill
Bassoon



Michael Severance
Bassoon &
Contrabassoon



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Co-Principal
Horn



Mark Almond
Co-Principal
Horn



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Horn



Brian McCarty
Horn



Lawrence Ragent
Horn



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Trumpet



John Pearson
Trumpet



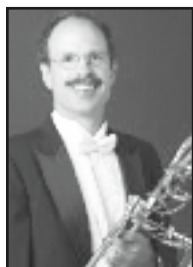
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Regular Substitute



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Principal Trombone



Donald Kennelly
Trombone



David Ridge
Trombone &
Bass Trombone



Zachariah Spellman
Tuba/Cimbasso



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Richard Kvistad
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Associate Timpani



Patricia Niemi
Percussion



Olga Ortenberg
Rakitchenkov
Harp

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



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Carrie Weick
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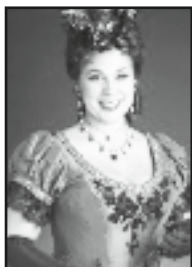


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Manager & Librarian*

REGULAR CHORUS



Kathleen Bayler
Soprano



Sara Colburn
Soprano



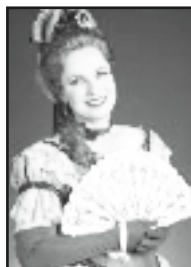
Dvora Djoraev
Soprano



Mary Finch
Soprano



Claire Kelm
Soprano



Elisabeth Rom Lucio
Soprano



Angela Eden Moser
Soprano



Rachelle Perry
Soprano



Virginia Pluth
Soprano



Carole Schaffer
Soprano



Mitzie Kay Weiner
Soprano



Buffy Baggott
Mezzo-Soprano



Roberta Bowman
Mezzo-Soprano



Janet Campbell
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Mouzon
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Munro
Mezzo-Soprano



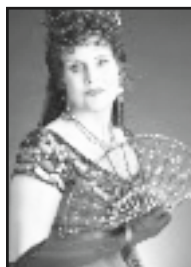
Erin Neff
Mezzo-Soprano



Laurel Porter
Mezzo-Soprano



Laurel Rice
Mezzo-Soprano



Shelley Seitz
Mezzo-Soprano



Claudia Siefer
Mezzo-Soprano



Donna Turchi
Mezzo-Soprano



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Tenor



Alan Cochran
Tenor



Chris Corley
Tenor



Daniel Harper
Tenor



Christopher Jackson
Tenor



Phillip Pickens
Tenor

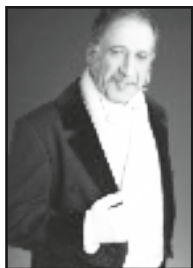
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Chester Pidduck
Tenor



Colby Roberts
Tenor



Sigmund Seigel
Tenor



Dan Stanley
Tenor



Alexander Taite
Tenor



Andrew Truett
Tenor



Richard Walker
Tenor



Torlef Borsting
Baritone



Anders Fröhlich
Baritone



Cameron Henley
Baritone



Ken Johnson
Baritone



David Kekuewa
Baritone



Frederick Matthews
Baritone



Ken Rafanan
Baritone
Leave of Absence



Michael Rogers
Baritone



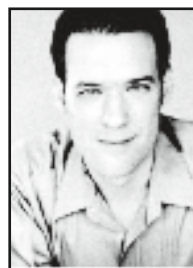
Jere Torkelsen
Baritone



Bojan Knežević
Bass



Jim Meyer
Bass



William O'Neill
Bass



William Pickersgill
Bass

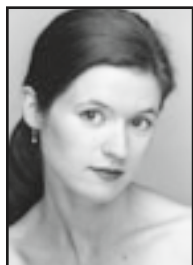


Valery Portnov
Bass

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

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More than 75,000 Bay Area families, students and teachers experience the excitement of opera with a variety of educational and community engagement programs presented through the combined efforts of San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Opera Guild, and the Merola Opera Program.

YOUR OPERA EXPERIENCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

Performance Etiquette

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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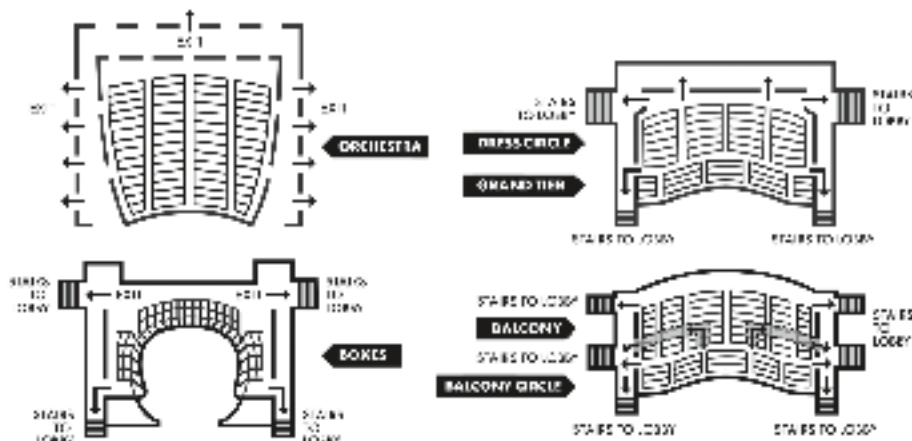
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San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center War Memorial Opera House Exit Diagram



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

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