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Please e-mail comments, questions, and feedback about *San Francisco Opera Magazine* to publications@sfopera.com



On the cover:

Anonymous
Louise A.K.S. Clapp[e] Manuscript
Collection, Box 153, Neg. # 7555 (4 x 5")
California State Library
Included with the letters and documents in the Louise Clappe Collection at the California State Library is this undated photograph—perhaps Louise Clappe (“Dame Shirley”) or her niece (Genevieve Stebbins)—surrounded by the California wilderness.

FEATURES

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by Richard Scheinin
The new John Adams opera *Girls of the Golden West* reunites the composer with director and librettist Peter Sellars and takes an unflinching look at the California Gold Rush.
- 41 Homeward**
by Alice Miller Cotter
With *Girls of the Golden West*, composer John Adams revisits his musical roots.
- 44 The Dark Side of the Gold Rush**
by Gary Kamiya
The crucible of the Gold Rush and its ensuing culture clash offer lessons for today.

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A MESSAGE FROM

THE BOARD OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Welcome to the final performances of the fall season.

Our 95th season is off to a great start with critically-acclaimed performances of *Turandot*, *Elektra*, and *La Traviata*. We complete the fall season with three highly anticipated productions: Massenet's *Manon*, presented on our stage for the first time in nearly 20 years, with rising stars Michael Fabiano and Ellie Dehn in role debuts; the reprise of our beautifully restored *Turandot* by David Hockney with a superb cast including Nina Stemme, Brian Jagde, and Leah Crocetto; and the world premiere of John Adams' *Girls of the Golden West*, which many are calling the international classical music event of the year.

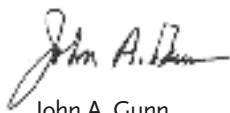


DREW ALTIZER

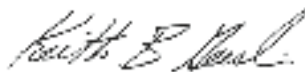
In addition, on November 30 the San Francisco Opera Chorus led by Ian Robertson presents a concert in the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater, followed by our annual Adler Fellows Concert on December 8. We hope you will also join us for a festive holiday treat on December 1: *Christmas with Sol3 Mio*, featuring the Platinum Award-winning New Zealand vocal trio of Adler Fellow tenors Pene and Amitai Pati and their baritone cousin Moses Mackay. The breadth and artistic excellence of San Francisco Opera's programming is an essential part of what makes the Bay Area such an extraordinary place. Whether you are joining us for the first time or the 500th, you are part of a passionate opera community that comes together for emotionally thrilling entertainment.

We are deeply grateful to all our patrons and donors, and give special thanks to our Company sponsors who provide the major underwriting that makes everything we do possible: the Dolby Family, Bertie Bialek Elliott, Ann and Gordon Getty, Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson, Franklin and Catherine Johnson, the Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, Steven M. Menzies, Bernard and Barbro Osher, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem, Dianne and Tad Taube, Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment Funds, Diane B. Wilsey, and Barbara A. Wolfe. We also give special thanks to our Season Sponsor, Wells Fargo; our Corporate Partners, Chevron and United Airlines; and our Official Wine Sponsor, HALL Wines. Ticket sales cover only a third of our costs, and world-class opera in San Francisco is possible only because of our generous donors. We hope you will be inspired by their philanthropy and consider San Francisco Opera in your year-end giving plans.

Thank you for joining us this fall for the music that moves the city, and enjoy the performance!



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Chairman of the Board



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MATTHEW WASHBURN



Adler Fellows Prepare for Annual Concert

One of the consistent highpoints of the opera season, *The Future Is Now: Adler Fellows Concert* takes place on **Friday, December 8 at 7:30 p.m.** For their final concert of the year, the Adler Fellows from San Francisco Opera Center's acclaimed young-artist training program perform an adventurous mix of opera scenes and arias. In a change from prior concerts, this year's program is in the War Memorial Opera House. Exciting young conductor James Gaffigan leads the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

Since its inception in 1977, the prestigious Adler Fellowship has nurtured the development of more than 175 singers, pianists and coaches, and directors. This annual showcase has traditionally been an opportunity to bid farewell to the young artists who have completed the two- (or, in a few cases, three-) year performance residency—as well as a chance to spot the next rising star.

Directed by current Adler Fellow Aria Umezawa (Toronto, Canada), *The Future Is Now* features sopranos Sarah Cambridge (Vancouver, Canada), Amina Edris (Christchurch, New Zealand), Toni Marie Palmertree (Fleetwood, Pennsylvania); tenors Pene and Amitai Pati (Auckland, New Zealand), Kyle van Schoonhoven (Lockport, New York); baritone Andrew G. Manea (Troy, Michigan); bass-baritone Brad Walker (Lake Zurich, Illinois); bass Anthony Reed (Alexandria, Minnesota); and pianists/apprentice coaches John Elam (Cleburne, Texas) and Jennifer Szeto (Calgary, Canada). This concert marks the final appearances by Edris, Palmertree, Pene Pati, Walker, Reed, and Szeto as San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows.

It will be James Gaffigan's first time leading the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, an opportunity that he relishes. "These young singers are at an extraordinary moment in their lives," says the 38-year-old conductor. "In terms of their selections, they have chosen very interesting repertoire, intelligent and meaty."

San Francisco Symphony associate conductor from 2006 to 2009, Gaffigan is currently chief conductor at the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra and guest conductor at the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. The New York native is equally versatile in opera and symphonic music, both of which, he says, provide the right balance in his life. "I'm in such awe of what singers need to do onstage, and being so exposed up there," he says. "What I love about opera is that the general public doesn't see what I am doing; I'm just supporting the orchestra and singers. It's a beautiful thing for me."

For more information and to purchase tickets for *The Future Is Now*, call the Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330 or visit sfopera.com/futureisnow.



VERA HARTMANN

James Gaffigan

Did You Know?

For next summer's production of Wagner's *Ring*, 415 musicians and staff are involved on the stage or in the pit; 26 53-foot trucks are used to transport the sets; 920 liters of liquid nitrogen are used *nightly* for fog effects.

In March 1848, there were fewer than 800 non-native Americans in California. After the Gold Rush—the setting for John Adams' new opera *Girls of the Golden West*—the population soared to 300,000 new Americans, many of them settling in boomtowns such as Downieville. Yet there were very few women among them. By 1860, adult women made up just 19% of the state's population.

The cost of living was high in the remote regions of the California Gold Rush. At the peak of the boom in 1849, an egg could cost the equivalent of \$25 in today's money, coffee went for approximately \$100 per pound, and boots could cost more than a miner's average monthly income.

In Act III's Cours-la-Reine scene from Massenet's *Manon*, Manon's dress must reflect the height of Parisian sophistication and fashion. For the Company's new production, director and costume designer Vincent Boussard has created a contemporary combination of gold netting over a terracotta polyester-chiffon corseted dress. The costume was hand-painted, stitched, and assembled in San Francisco Opera's Costume Shop.



Because the set design for David Hockney's production of *Turandot* abounds in unusual geometric shapes—many of them flying at compound angles—translating all of these into exact measurements for construction took six weeks of computer work alone. Now 25 years old, the sets have undergone a recent refurbishment.

SOURCES: SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ARCHIVES; THE SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA PIONEERS

One Ring for All

When the *Ring* cycle returns to San Francisco Opera in summer 2018, a variety of educational programs will accompany the epic undertaking. Whether you are a “*Ring* nut” or first-timer, there is an event right for you.

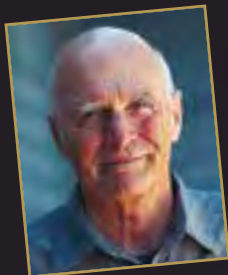


Ring 101

New to the *Ring*? Begin your journey into Richard Wagner’s mythical world with masterful guides who introduce the story, characters, creative genius, and acclaimed Francesca Zambello production. San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Kip Cranna (left) leads the engaging and lively overview of the *Ring*, accompanied by artists, historians, and production staff. *Tuesdays, June 12, 19, & 23, from 11 a.m.–3 p.m.*

Ring Symposium

Ready to take a deeper dive into the *Ring*? Join Wagner scholars, Company artists, and production staff for in-depth presentations and discussions. *Thursdays, June 14, 21, & 28 from 11 a.m.–1 p.m.*



Sing Faster

Join Academy-Award nominated filmmaker Jon Else (left) for screenings of *Sing Faster: The Stagehands’ Ring Cycle*. Told entirely from the perspective of union stagehands, *Sing Faster* documents the efforts needed to mount and present Wagner’s *Ring* cycle over the course of four nights and more than 17 hours of onstage performance. *Thursdays, June 14, 21, & 28 from 2–3:30 p.m.*

Ring Forum

San Francisco Opera and the Wagner Society of Northern California present three *Ring* lecture events. Learn about the inception and evolution of Wagner’s Bayreuth Festival Theatre, how various concepts of the *Ring* have developed around the globe, the various endings that could have brought the cycle to its conclusion, and more. *Saturdays, June 16, 23, & 30 from 10 a.m.–3:30 p.m.*

Ring Community Day

Join the San Francisco Opera Education Department and Opera Guild for a multi-generational and interactive day exploring the *Ring*. Programming will introduce this timeless and fabled journey to a new generation of Wagner fans. The *Ring* Community Day includes First Act early childhood programming, Exploration Workshops for Families, Sing-A-Story, and more. *Saturday, June 9 from 10 a.m.–5 p.m.*

For more information, please email Community Programs Manager Alyssa Stone at astone@sfopera.com.

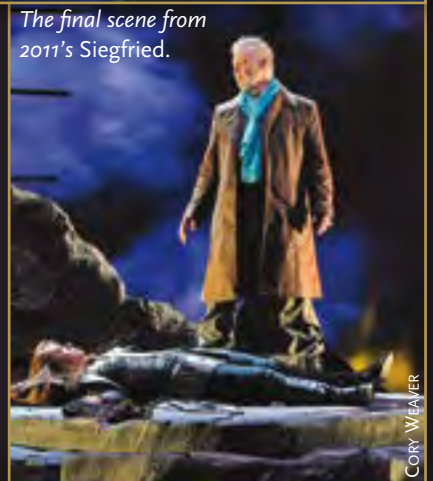
Wotan (Mark Delavan) and the Valkyries from the Company’s 2011 *Ring*.



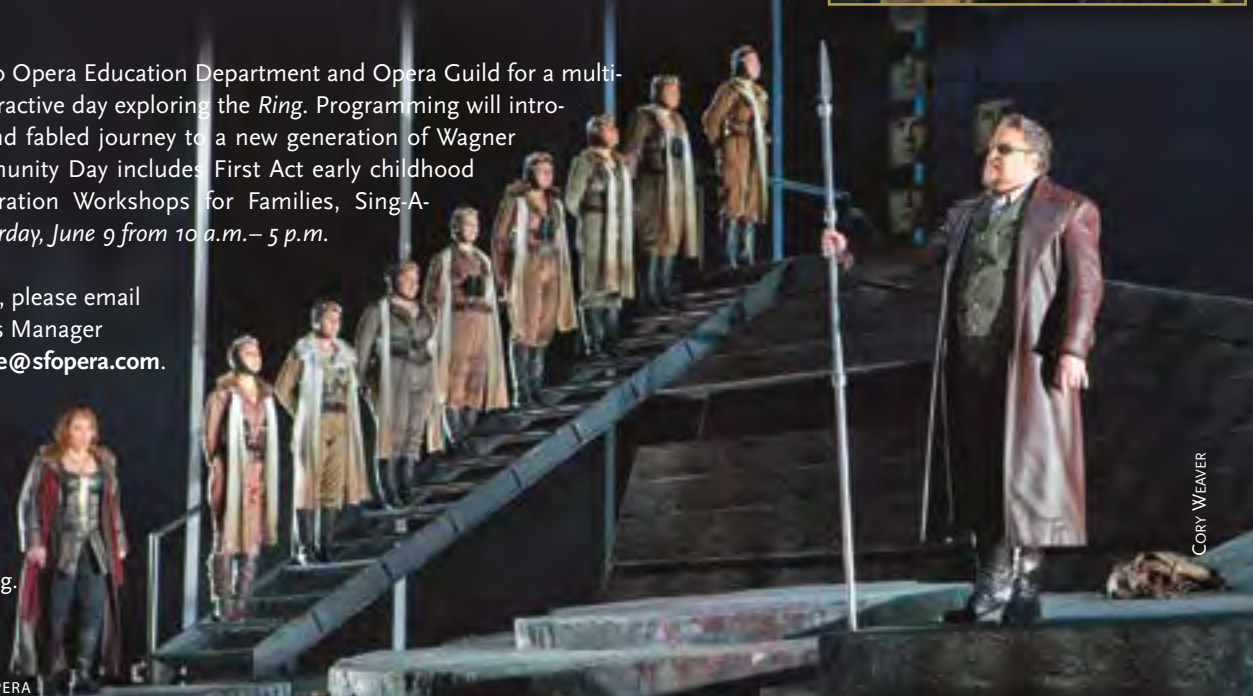
The original Rheinmaidens from the 1876 world premiere of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in Bayreuth, Germany.



The Rheinmaidens as seen in the Company’s 2011 *Ring* production.



The final scene from 2011’s *Siegfried*.



Meet Adam Broidy and Lisa Bullard



With the opening of the 2017–18 Season, San Francisco Opera welcomed a new chief information officer and director of marketing.

Previously technology consultant for the recently re-opened Curran Theatre and chief technology officer for the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Adam Broidy replaces Jarrod Bell as CIO. Among his many achievements, “Adam successfully led the search for a new ticketing/box office system and managed the redesign of sfcurran.com,” said Chief Financial Officer Michael

Simpson. In his free time, Adam serves as board vice-president of the local contemporary dance company Post:Ballet and trains in acrobatics at Circus Center.

Lisa Bullard, formerly of the Philadelphia Orchestra, is San Francisco Opera’s new director of marketing, succeeding Marcia Lazer who retired in July after 11 years with the Company. “Lisa impressed us all with her incisive thinking, her care for the total audience experience, and her energetic belief in the power of opera to connect people,” said General Director Matthew Shilvock. “We’re grateful to welcome her at a particularly dynamic time for the Bay Area as we look to build exciting bridges between opera and our community.”



DREW ALTIZER

Celebrating Dianne and Tad Taube

San Francisco Opera Guild presents *An Evening on the Stage* honoring longtime San Francisco Opera and Opera Guild supporters Dianne and Tad Taube. Co-chaired by Arlene Inch and Danielle Lane, this special gala event also celebrates the close of San Francisco Opera’s fall repertory season and rings in the holiday season.

On **Monday, December 4, 2017**, the evening starts at 6 p.m. with cocktails in the lobby of the War Memorial Opera House. A sumptuous onstage dinner, prepared by McCalls Catering & Events with décor by J. Riccardo Benavides, is followed by dancing to the music from the local band Notorious. Neiman Marcus Union Square returns as the evening’s presenting sponsor.

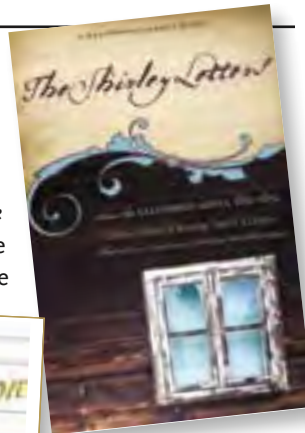
Individual tickets for *An Evening on the Stage* are priced at \$1,250, \$2,500, \$5,000, and \$7,500; seating is limited. Proceeds will benefit San Francisco Opera Guild’s signature education and community programs, which reach more than 50,000 students annually throughout Northern California. For tickets and more information, contact San Francisco Opera Guild at (415) 565-3204.

Opera Shop Recommendations

Read more about the inspiration for John Adams’ new opera *Girls of the Golden West*: the California history classic **The Shirley Letters**, a collection of 23 letters by Louise Clappe penned under the name “Dame Shirley,” describing the rugged conditions and clash of cultures in the gold mining camps from 1851 to 1852.

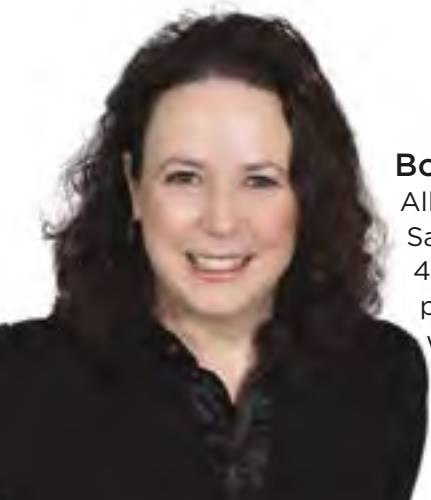
Thoughtful and engaging, John Adams’ autobiography **Hallelujah Junction** recounts his creative journey from New England childhood to finding his compositional voice in the Bay Area. He also writes articulately of musical works such as *Nixon in China* and *Doctor Atomic* and their larger cultural context.

The Metropolitan Opera’s 2012 Grammy-winning DVD of **Wagner’s Ring cycle** (Deutsche Grammophon) features an all-star cast of Bryn Terfel, Jonas Kaufmann, Deborah Voigt, Jay Hunter Morris, Stephanie Blythe, Eva-Maria Westbroek, and Eric Owens. James Levine and Fabio Luisi lead the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus in a production by Robert Lepage.



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

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Manon: Marcia Green

Turandot: Robert Hartwell

Girls of the Golden West: Clifford Cranna

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ERIC FRAZIER



IN MEMORIAM



PETR KÁDLEC

JIŘÍ BĚLOHLÁVEK, *Conductor*

An artist of tremendous integrity and soul, Jiří Bělohlávek was a leading interpreter of Central European repertoire, particularly music of his Czech homeland. Under his baton, San Francisco Opera audiences were treated to commanding performances of Leos Janáček's *The Makropulos Case* in 2010 and the same composer's *Jenůfa* in 2016. He was also featured in the farewell gala for General Director David Gockley in 2016, leading the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Renée Fleming, Nadine Sierra, and Sasha Cooke in the final trio from Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*. "At his only rehearsal, he stepped onto the podium and without a single word led the orchestra and singers in a sublime reading of the piece. His enjoyment of the music was apparent, and we were all caught up in the moment together," recalls Orchestra violinist Leslie Ludena. "In him, the world lost a truly inspirational conductor, musician, and person, one we are very grateful to have known."

ROY TAN



LEE BLAKELEY, *Stage Director*

One of the leading opera directors of his generation, Lee Blakeley tragically died in August from a heart attack, just a few days shy of his 46th birthday. As a dramaturg, translator, and broadcaster, he had a strong association with companies in his native U.K. and at the

Santa Fe Opera where he had created four productions in recent years: *Madama Butterfly*, *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, *The Grand Duchess of Gérolstein*, and *Rigoletto*. In 2015, he directed San Francisco Opera's memorable *Sweeney Todd*, which had originated at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris where he had staged a number of American musical theater works. "I was always impressed by his singular viewpoint, his brilliant readings on text and music, and his total passion for the craft of directing," says *Sweeney Todd* assistant director Shawna Lucey. "He had so much more to give opera audiences and artists, and I will forever mourn his loss."

KORALJKA LOCKHART,

Administrator and Editor

As a multifaceted spokesperson for San Francisco Opera, Kori Lockhart spent more than four decades imparting an encyclopedic knowledge of the art form and the Company. Born in 1932 in Dubrovnik, Croatia, Lockhart lived and worked in Rome for several years before moving to San Francisco and becoming music director for San Francisco's KKHJ classical radio station. She worked for San Francisco Opera beginning in 1970 to 1974 as a publicity assistant and press representative, returning to the Company in 1981 as director of public relations. In 1986, she became the publications editor, a position she held until 2001. Afterward, she assumed a new part-time role as San Francisco Opera's archivist, creating the online performance archive. "Kori was tough, loyal, authoritative," remembers critic Martin Bernheimer. "She produced fact sheets that made some critics, including this one, seem smarter than truth might dictate. She was profoundly missed when she retired, seriously mourned when she died."



KEN HOWARD

NICOLAI GEDDA, *Tenor*

Along with his bright, silvery voice, Swedish tenor Nicolai Gedda enjoyed a long career—he sang well into his 70s—and an exceptional versatility that encompassed Italian, German, French, and Russian repertoires. At San Francisco Opera, Gedda performed on three occasions: the title role of Auber's *Fra Diavolo* (1968), the Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier* (1971), and (pictured here) Chevalier des Grieux in *Manon* (1971). As a recording artist, Gedda left a vast treasure trove for posterity. "Nicolai Gedda's personality was towering and gentle all at once," shares director Francesca Zambello who worked with the legendary tenor toward the end of his career, in a Florida Grand Opera production of *Tales of Hoffmann* in 1980. "Aside from the voice that was so stylish and elegant, he always sported a handsome smile to match his understated Swedish demeanor."

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



BRENDA LEWIS, *Soprano*

Over the course of a long and diverse career, Brenda Lewis sang on Broadway, starred in new operas by Marc Blitzstein and Jack Beeson, and performed regularly at New York City Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. She was a guest artist at San Francisco Opera for two seasons in the early 1950s, singing a characteristically wide array of roles, from Mozart (Cherubino and Donna

Elvira) to Strauss (Salome and the Marschallin) and Puccini (Suor Angelica and Musetta). After retiring from the stage, Lewis directed productions at the New Haven Opera Theatre and taught at the Hartt School in Hartford, Conn., sharing her wisdom and legacy with generations of young singers.

KRISTINE JEPSON, *Mezzo-soprano*

As a young artist performing with the San Francisco Opera Center and Western Opera Theater in the early 1990s, Kristine Jepson was destined for great things. After small parts in the Company's *Suor Angelica*, *Elektra*, *War and Peace*, and *Lulu*, she stepped up to the lead role of Sister Helen Prejean (with Susan Graham) in the world premiere production of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* in 2000. "Kris had a thrilling, vast, powerful voice, flawless technique, and profound dramatic skill onstage. She was clear as a bell and you understood every word and every intention," says Heggie. "She was also unbelievably fast and accurate when learning a role: I never heard her sing a false note in *Dead Man Walking* or any other opera she performed, and she knew everyone else's parts, too!" As committed to new work as she was to her beloved Mozart and Strauss, Jepson created the role of Kitty Oppenheimer for the San Francisco Opera world premiere of John Adams' *Doctor Atomic* in 2005 (seen here).



TERRENCE MCCARTHY

CHARLOT D. MALIN,

Philanthropist

San Francisco Opera Guild President from 2014 to 2016, Charlot Malin left an unforgettable mark on the philanthropic life of San Francisco. Born and raised in Norway, Charlot became a successful Bay Area real estate executive and designer. With her husband, Greg, she ran Troon Pacific, Inc., which specializes in environmentally-sustainable residences in the Bay Area. In addition, she nurtured an early love for the arts, having attended her first opera in Oslo at age seven where her father's aunt and her cousin sang in *Aida*. She was a passionate benefactor to SFMOMA, as well as to the Opera. According to Guild President Jane Mudge, "She was an incredible champion of our Guild Education programs, striving to bring opera to the youth of today."



DREW ALTZER



TAMAKI McCracken, *Chorus*

A member of the Opera Chorus for 25 consecutive seasons, mezzo-soprano Tamaki McCracken sang with the Company from 1970 to 1994. She was joined on the War Memorial Opera House stage by her husband, Robert McCracken, whom she met while studying music at the Music and Arts Institute in San Francisco; they were invited together to audition for San Francisco Opera and were accepted into the Chorus at the same time. According to her daughter Kathy, Tamaki was always so thankful for her time at the Opera, though she also enjoyed her "outside" work at Tiffany & Co. She can be seen in the 1981 Academy Award-winning documentary *In the Shadow of the Stars*, particularly in the footage of Verdi's *Macbeth*.



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IN MEMORIAM *continued*



LYNN MCKEE, *Electrician*

Affectionately nicknamed “the Ghost,” Lynn Patrick McKee began with San Francisco Opera in 1975, was promoted to assistant master electrician in 1983, and was the Company’s master electrician from 1987 until his retirement in 2004. During his time, which intersected with the tenures of four general directors, he helped build an incredible

lighting crew, while also overseeing the transition from manual lighting controls to a computerized system. McKee is remembered warmly by his former colleagues. “I know that after the tears stop that we will smile and remember all of the kooky, awkward, fantastically funny things that he did, and that when things were bad, either at work or at home, he stood by your side and told you it’s going to be okay,” shares War Memorial Opera House Technical Director John Boatwright.



WILLIAM PYNCHON, *Violinist*

An active member of the Bay Area music community, both as a performer and teacher, William Pynchon played in the San Francisco Opera Orchestra’s first violin section for over 30 years. He studied with Naoum Blinder, Isaac Stern’s teacher and San Francisco Symphony concertmaster, and later joined the San Francisco Sym-

phony as assistant concertmaster in 1957. He also served in the same position with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra from 1974 until his retirement in 1998. Fondly remembered by his colleagues, Pynchon left a warm and lasting legacy with the Orchestra.



CHERYL “RUSTY” ROLLAND, *Philanthropist*

Rusty Rolland was a board member of the Merola Opera Program for almost three decades and served two terms as its president. Among her accomplishments, she helped create the Merola Career Grants, which provide a way for young artists to continue their careers. Rusty was a passionate supporter of classical music and worked with many other arts organizations,

including Chanticleer and the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. “She was a true gift to opera,” remembers Merola Board Chair Jayne C. Davis. “Her knowledge and enthusiasm for the art form revealed an extraordinary depth of feeling. We will miss her dearly.”



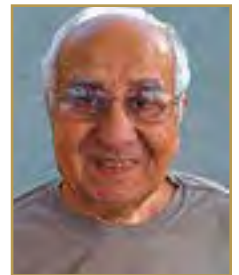
KEN FRIEDMAN

KURT MOLL, *Bass*

Born in Buir, Germany, bass Kurt Moll established himself in Germany’s regional opera houses during the early 1960s before emerging on the international scene with debuts at the Bayreuth Festival (1968), San Francisco Opera (his first U.S. performance in 1974), Milan’s La Scala (1974), and the Metropolitan Opera (1978). Renowned for his warm, expressive voice and portrayal of many roles, Moll was known to San Francisco audiences for his Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* (1974, 1988, and, seen here, 2000), King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde* (1974), Baron Ochs in Strauss’ *Der Rosenkavalier* (1985), and Osmin in Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1990). “His singing of Gurnemanz in the 1988 *Parsifal* is something that will live with me always,” recalls former Principal Guest Conductor Patrick Summers. “It was the kind of singing that changes the air of the building forever.”

EUGENE NAHAM, *Chorus*

Tenor Eugene Naham sang as a tenured member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus from 1968 to 1980 and continued in the Extra Chorus until 1990. In 1971, he was one of the solo Footmen in the Company’s *Der Rosenkavalier*, which starred Sena Jurinac as the Marschallin, Christa Ludwig as Octavian, and Helen Donath as Sophie. An Air Force veteran, Naham served in combat in Korea, Japan, and the Philippines before singing in San Francisco. (Among his many outside gigs, he twice sang the National Anthem at Candlestick Park.) Born in Fort Worth, Texas, he spent his final years in the neighboring city of Arlington.



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STRIKING GOLD



PETER NEWARK WESTERN AMERICANA / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

*Premiering at San Francisco Opera on November 21,
John Adams' *Girls of the Golden West*
takes an unflinching look at the California Gold Rush.*

In the summer of 1851, a 32-year-old New Englander named Louise Amelia Clappe arrived with her physician husband in the remote Northern California mining town of Rich Bar, about 200 miles northeast of San Francisco on the north fork of the Feather River. Thoroughly educated, she was immediately struck by this alien world; the majesty of its landscape stood in contrast to the hard-scrubbed and often brutal life she faced. Those gold-obsessed miners! They were filled with vim and violence—hard workers who gambled, brawled, and got hammered at the end of the day. Poor Louise! How ridiculous that she should have to use “a

coarse diaper for a table napkin,” she wrote in one of many letters to her sister back East, “and an old shovel as a grill to cook on.”

Yet, she declared, “this strange life fascinates me.”

Published under the pseudonym “Dame Shirley,” her collected letters have come to be regarded as a cornerstone of 19th-century California literature and now have been set to music by composer John Adams. *Girls of the Golden West* reunites him with director and librettist Peter Sellars and receives its world premiere this month at San Francisco Opera. “I wanted not to just sit on my laurels this year,” says Adams who turned 70 in February. “I wanted to

come out with a major work. It made for chaos”—he spent a solid six months on the road, conducting or attending a worldwide array of 70th birthday programs—“but I’m glad I did it.”

Like Dame Shirley, Adams is a transplanted New Englander—thoroughly educated at Harvard—who migrated to California and had his life cracked wide open by the change. He described California’s seductive and mind-bending effects in *Hallelujah Junction: Composing an American Life*, his 2008 memoir. He also depicted them musically in *The Dharma at Big Sur*, a 2003 orchestral work that explodes with light, as if recreating Adams’ first gaze at the Pacific in 1971. Yet unlike Dame Shirley, he never left California. Adams became a dyed-in-the-wool Berkeley-ite and, since 1979, the owner of a cabin in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, down the road from Rich Bar and the town of Downieville where much of the action in *Girls of the Golden West* unfolds. He has spent summers there with his wife and children, hiking the hills and valleys; his cell phone is loaded with photos of whitewater and bluffs. And to his delight—like Leoš Janáček composing *The Cunning Little Vixen* or Benjamin Britten writing *Peter Grimes*—he now finds himself “writing something in my own backyard, a California opera” based upon the real words and stories of the people of the Gold Rush.

Sellers has given Adams quite a storyline, weaving the libretto from a trove of period sources: miners’ diaries, newspaper accounts, speeches, poems, the observations of Mark Twain, and original Gold Rush song lyrics. But Shirley’s effervescent prose is a critical through line and key inspiration for Adams’ endlessly coloristic score, to be conducted at the War Memorial Opera House by Grant Gershon. The composer marvels at her words, recalling how she raises her eyes up and sees “the never-enough-to-be-talked-about sky of California...like an immense concave of pure sapphire.”

“Aah, it gives me the goose pimples,” he practically moans. “It’s such beautiful language.”

Shirley’s words will be sung by the extraordinary young soprano Julia Bullock who makes her San Francisco Opera debut.



Left: Prospectors in the Sierra Nevada, 1849

Top and right: The bars of gambling saloons were a meeting place for settlers of different ethnicities, seen in both David Gropman’s Act I set and in an 19th-century engraving.

Her opulent voice can evoke the moon emerging from behind a cloud, and she has a way of turning every aria into its own dramatic world. She first sang for Adams in 2014 at an audition in New York; he immediately offered her major roles in three productions of his works, including this one. “I think my learning curve has had to be high, just because of the people I’m working with,” she says of Adams and Sellers. “The vocal demands that John puts on his singers are really high, but it actually has encouraged me to not fret about my voice so much, to just kind of lay out the material in a very clear and direct way so it becomes about the storytelling. I don’t think John knows the positive impact that singing his music has had on me over the past year.”

There are no grand divas in the *Girls of the Golden West* cast; all the singers are in their 20s and 30s. San Francisco Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock likens them to the young Gold Rush characters they depict: “people of big emotions, of big ambitions, on the cutting edge of life and making exploratory strides in the world. This is a cast that’s exploring John’s new music together, just as their characters were exploring the Northern California frontier. You feel the energy of possibility. I think it’s one of the most exciting casts that we’ve assembled.”

Bullock has been a muse for Adams in composing his new work. But the very idea of the opera belongs to Sellers who was asked several years ago to direct a La Scala production of Puccini’s *La Fanciulla del West*. Based on the 1905 David Belasco play *The Girl of the Golden West* (Belasco’s father was a forty-niner), it takes place in a Gold Rush mining camp and saloon.

Sellers, who might have been an investigative reporter in another life, began sleuthing through 19th-century source materials and was turned off by the opera’s sugar-coated approach to history. Puccini’s opera left out the juicy stuff: the fact that Gold Rush miners were white, black, Chinese, Mexican, Hawaiian, French, Egyptian. They came from everywhere in search of the new El Dorado. What’s more, some had recorded their experiences, touching on themes that continue to drive political discourse in the 21st century: matters of race, immigration, and vigilante justice, not to mention the whole question of who is a “real American.” Turning down La Scala, Sellers wondered if a “real” Gold Rush





Left: The 1853 felling of a giant sequoia by settlers in Calaveras County was an inspiration for the action and set of Act II of *Girls of the Golden West*.

Below: Conductor Grant Gershon confers with composer John Adams

opera might be in the cards and proposed the idea to Adams who was intrigued. Since 2005's *Doctor Atomic*, another San Francisco Opera world premiere and commission which Sellars served as librettist and director, the composer had been hunting for his next operatic subject. He had considered the rise and fall of Lyndon Baines Johnson, as well as the Branch Davidian standoff in Waco, Texas, even visiting the site of that violent siege with the late novelist Denis Johnson. But for one reason or another, these and other ideas all "shriveled up," Adams says. Not this one. This Gold Rush idea was pay dirt and Dame Shirley's letters would be the pure gold in Sellars' glittering cache of documents.

Girls of the Golden West (note that "Girls" is plural, as Shirley is one of several female protagonists) is the fourth opera by Adams to be staged by San Francisco Opera. (The others are *Nixon in China*, which premiered in 1987 at Houston Grand Opera with Sellars directing; *The Death of Klinghoffer*, first staged in 1991 at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels with Sellars directing and co-commissioned by San Francisco Opera; and *Doctor Atomic*.) As is typical for Adams and Sellars, their latest work operates on multiple levels. Its texts and exuberant period costumes and sets carry the very smell and feel of the 19th century. Its potent political subtext connects past and present. "We are evoking a certain period of American history," Sellars comments, "but this opera also carries the DNA of our period right now."

And then there is its timeless, mythic element. In 1851, the same year that Louise Clappe arrived in Rich Bar, Richard Wagner was embarking on his *Ring* cycle: "I don't want to make too much of the connection, but there is another opera about people obsessed with gold," Adams says, laughing. It isn't a huge leap from *Das Rheingold* to the Gold Rush and "the original bubble economy" of the Sierra Nevadas, driven by "fake news" stories about the fast riches to be made, "where you would just stoop over and scoop up a nugget," as Adams puts it. He wonders whether the Bay Area's current economic cycle with techies as the new



STEFAN COHEN

Eyvind Earle, concept painting, c. 1950s; Sleeping Beauty (1959); collection of the Walt Disney Family Foundation, © Disney | The Walt Disney Family Museum, Disney Enterprises, Inc. © 2017 The Walt Disney Family Museum. The Walt Disney Family Museum is not affiliated with Disney Enterprises, Inc.

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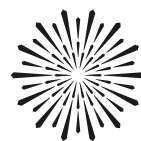


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forty-niners is driven by similar expectations. “When I read about Uber or Facebook being valued in the billions of dollars, I think that’s expressive of some completely irrational part of the human collective psyche,” he says.

Yet Adams himself has grown obsessed with gold, or at least the Gold Rush. His shelves at home are lined with books about 19th-century California history, and he has spent much of the last two years digesting Sellars’ source materials. The librettist panned and sifted, isolating the essentials. There’s Dame Shirley, of course, but also Mark Twain’s *Roughing It* and *The Gold Rush Diary of Ramón Gil Navarro*, an Argentinian-Chilean entrepreneur with a poetic streak who sized up gold’s fatal allure thusly: “You turn the mine into your lover and give it your soul, your thoughts and your existence, as if it were a young girl who had driven you crazy.”

As the Gold Rush turned ugly and “outsiders” were stripped of their claims, Navarro became one of its victims. In the libretto, his story overlaps with another historical account, that of a young Mexican woman named Josefa Segovia who worked as a waitress in Downieville. Harassed by a drunken white miner on July 4, 1851, she stabbed him in self-defense and was summarily put on trial by a mob of forty-niners who hanged her the next day from a bridge over the Yuba River.

Adams had known for years about what he calls “the Downieville tragedy.” “There’s a plaque right in town,” he shrugs. He passed the story along to Sellars who wove it into his storyboard. The Gold Rush song lyrics—largely pulled from a 1850s compendium called *Put’s Original California Songster*—injected additional local material into the proceedings.

In their time, the lyrics were sung to popular melodies like “Pop Goes the Weasel” and “Camptown Races.” That wasn’t going to work, so Adams wrote his own propulsive tunes. He calls them “kind of upbeat and at times rowdy.” In later scenes, they are infused with an aggressive energy that he found “almost shocking” when the male chorus sang through parts of the score during August rehearsals.



STEFAN COHEN

Left to right: From an August tech rehearsal for Act II, soprano Julia Bullock with crew and chorus; composer John Adams and librettist/director Peter Sellars; “Golden Girls” J’Nai Bridges (Josefa Segovia), Hye Jung Lee (Ah Sing), and Bullock (Louise Clappe).

Songs and choruses alternate throughout the work: “It’s a bit of a show,” Adams says. “I certainly wasn’t going to depict such a spartan, simple, almost crude life with extravagant Straussian orchestration. So I started out with an orchestra that should sound just as simple and slightly rough-edged as I would imagine life would be out there. I added an accordion and a guitar, just to give it a little flavor.”

He doesn’t tip his own hat too much, so Bullock helps him out. “John writes great tunes,” she says, describing his melodic lines as “crystalline, truly some of the most beautiful lyric material you can imagine.”

And, as always, Adams writes for the dance.

Every one of his operas has dance at its center; his music cannot stand still. And here, neither can the forty-niners who after

being on their knees all day leap to their feet as a way of reclaiming their humanity. Choreographer John Heginbotham has created a wild ten-minute fandango to crown the miners’ Fourth of July celebration. We also get to meet Lola Montez, the Irish actress, dancer, and courtesan, who spent a portion of the 1850s in Gold Country. Lorena Feijóo, former principal dancer with San Francisco Ballet, here enacts the “Spider Dance,” Montez’s salacious calling card.

In the end, opera is about storytelling and Adams knows how to tell a tale.

“Narrative gives him this forward motion that just totally electrifies the music,” says Sellars. “I just think of John as making a movie with music—with close-ups, wide shots, and fast cutting. His sense of music is cinematic in the sense of being all-enveloping and completely about this incredible speed and momentum and intoxicating emotional life. And humor, which you get all the time with John.

“So am I am excited to be doing this project?” Sellars asks. “I am thrilled and grateful to whatever stork dropped this opera down our chimney.”

Richard Scheinin is a writer for the Bay Area News Group. He has written for GQ and Rolling Stone magazines and is the author of Field of Screams: The Dark Underside of America’s National Pastime (W.W. Norton), a history of baseball.



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Barbara Bream, joined in 2011

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Soprano
AMINA EDRIS
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Second-year Adler
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Bass
ANTHONY REED
Alexandria, Minnesota
Third-year Adler
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JOHN ELAM
Cleburne, Texas
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Bass-baritone
BRAD WALKER
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DREW ALTIZER

BRAVO! CLUB is a dedicated community of over 1,000 Bay Area young professionals ages 21–40 who enjoy exploring and learning about opera together. Members have access to discounted tickets, as well as educational and social events throughout the year, while helping to build the future audience for San Francisco Opera. Memberships cost \$75/person or \$125/couple and include the following benefits:

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Enjoy educational and social events, exclusive performances, artist meet-and-greets, and more.

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SHANNON ELIOT

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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 then-General Director David Gockley, including new operas and productions, multimedia projects, and outreach programs. This season, the Gunns' inspired generosity is helping make possible five productions—*Turandot*, *Elektra*, *Manon*, *Girls of the Golden West*, and the *Ring* cycle.

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

John is the former chairman and CEO of Dodge & Cox

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

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

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

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SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



Joan and David Traitel/Great Singers Fund (Sponsors, Michael Fabiano, *Manon*; Nina Stemme, *Turandot*)

“Without great singers, opera is not all it could be,” says San Francisco Opera board member Joan Traitel. “That’s why my husband and I approached David Gockley with the idea of creating a special way of supporting singers exclusively.” The result was the Great Singers Fund, launched by the Traitels in 2008 to provide San Francisco Opera with enhanced support to attract the world’s best singers. Joan, a member of the Opera’s board of directors since 1998, and her husband David were production sponsors for several years before founding the Great Singers Fund. “The Fund makes a difference in the quality of opera in San Francisco,” Joan explains. “Michael Fabiano is one of the most thrilling voices in opera today, and I have loved every performance of his in San Francisco. And to have the tremendous Nina Stemme back here after her triumphant Brünnhilde in our 2011 *Ring* cycle will be a real treat for audiences. 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 and Elizabeth Jamieson (Company Sponsor and Production Sponsor, *Turandot*)

Libby and Burgess Jamieson have made an extraordinary commitment to San Francisco Opera for over three decades by supporting traditional, classical productions. Their continuing enthusiasm for beloved, classic operas has assured an enduring place on the War Memorial Opera House stage for such applauded and memorable works as: *Die Meistersinger*, *Il Trittico*, *La Bohème*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*, *Tosca*, and *La Traviata*. Both Libby and Burgess consider their sustained support of the arts, especially the San Francisco Opera Association, as a means of ensuring important cultural, traditional links for the next generations’ listening appreciation. To ensure its musical enjoyment here again, Burgess says that: “Libby and I are pleased to bring *Turandot* back to San Francisco this season in this beautifully sung opera. In one of his final performances as a 10-year veteran of the company, San Francisco Opera Music Director, Nicola Luisotti, masterfully conducts a superbly assembled orchestra and cast of singers.” With over 45 years of experience in private and public investment management, Burgess is active on the San Francisco Opera’s board of directors and its investment committee.



KRISTEN LOKEN

RAY “SCOTTY” MORRIS



Bernard and Barbro Osher (Production Sponsor, *Turandot*)

A native of Maine, Bernard Osher became involved with San Francisco Opera as a subscriber nearly fifty years ago, shortly after moving here from New York. He and his wife Barbro, a native of Sweden, have supported every aspect of the Company’s work, from artist appearances to production facilities. Established in 1977, The Bernard Osher Foundation has funded virtually every major arts organization in the area, including youth programs. Higher education initiatives include community college support, Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes on 119 campuses nationwide, and Osher Centers for Integrative Medicine at several of the nation’s leading teaching hospitals, and at the Karolinska institute in Stockholm, Sweden. Bernard is a longstanding member of the Opera’s board of directors, serving on the Chairman’s Council. Barbro is Honorary Consul General of Sweden in San Francisco, and serves as Chairman of the Board of the Osher Foundation.

San Francisco Opera Guild (Production Sponsor, *Turandot*)

San Francisco Opera Guild provides dynamic artistic engagement and education opportunities for Bay Area students, teachers, adults and the extended community through award-winning programs that include Opera à la Carte, Sing a Story, Book to Bravo, Voices for Social Justice, Summer Conservatory and our exciting new year-round Opera Scouts program for teens. Founded in 1939, San Francisco Opera Guild believes the life lessons drawn from creative expression are the foundation of confidence, integrity and compassion. Our engagement and education programs extend the impact of opera, bringing it center stage in the life of the community. Every year, the Guild’s fundraising events give voice to the potential of more than 50,000 students in nearly 200 schools throughout Northern California providing 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 is a proud supporter of San Francisco Opera and a Production Sponsor of *Turandot*.



SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

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

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

Thanks to Dede's generosity, opera enthusiasts of all ages have much to celebrate. As Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor for the twelfth consecutive year, she is supporting the opening production of the 2017–18 Season, *Turandot*, the celebratory floral arrangements that graced the War Memorial Opera House on September 8, and the free, annual *Opera in the Park* concert at Sharon Meadow on September 10. Dede's leadership support was critical in the creation of the Wilsey Center for Opera, a dynamic, intimate new space at the Veterans Building, which opened in spring, 2016. The Center consolidates the Company's activities onto the War Memorial Campus, enabling San Francisco Opera to engage in exciting new programming and education work. Dede's philanthropic commitment to the community extends to many organizations. She is president of the Fine Arts Museums. She serves on the boards of the San Francisco Ballet, Grace Cathedral, the War Memorial, and is a lifetime trustee of UCSF.



DREW ALTZER

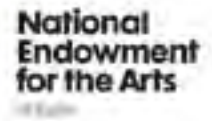


Jane Bernstein and Bob Ellis (Production Sponsor, *Girls of the Golden West*)

Jane Bernstein and Bob Ellis, a member of San Francisco Opera's board of directors since 2001, have long been supporters of contemporary opera. Production sponsorships for the Company have included Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Olivier Messiaen's *Saint Francois d'Assise*, and San Francisco Opera's first commission from John Adams, *Doctor Atomic*, in addition to the 2011 premiere of Francesca Zambello's production of Wagner's *Ring*. So it was no surprise when they were early advocates for this new work celebrating Mr. Adams' 70th birthday. Bob reflects, "We are grateful to San Francisco Opera for the unique opportunity to support John Adams and Peter Sellars not once but twice as they create new operas that elevate great events in history through art. *Doctor Atomic* and now *Girls of the Golden West* challenge us all to experience these special people and their times with provocation and delight." Bob also serves on the boards of Opera Parallèle as well as Opera America, the national service organization for professional opera companies.

National Endowment for the Arts (Production Sponsor, *Girls of the Golden West*)

Girls of the Golden West is supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. San Francisco Opera is grateful to the NEA for its long-time partnership and commitment to the work we do on stage.



THE
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The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Production Sponsor, *Girls of the Golden West*)

Founded in 1969, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation endeavors to strengthen, promote, and, where necessary, defend the contributions of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the well-being of diverse and democratic societies by supporting exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work. Additional information is available at mellon.org.

"We are deeply honored to partner with the Mellon Foundation on the creation of vanguard new works such as *Girls of the Golden West*," says General Director Matthew Shilvoek. "The Foundation has been a phenomenal partner in the Company's exploration of new works including *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, *Two Women*, and *Dolores Claiborne*."

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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.” Jan and Maria are providing significant support for opera artists through the establishment of three major funds. Through the *Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund*, they support many classic works of the Italian repertoire, including this season’s *Turandot* and *La Traviata*. Through the *Conductors Fund*, the continued appearances of Maestro Nicola Luisotti and other Italian conductors are assured at San Francisco Opera, and through the *Emerging Stars Fund*, Jan and Maria help bring some of opera’s most exciting rising talents to the stage. Finally, they are providing production sponsorship support for *Manon* this season.

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 2017–18 season include virtuoso singers like Aurelia Florian, Atalla Ayan, Ryan McKinny, Julia Bullock, Davóne Tines, and Solomon Howard. Also featured are returning Company favorites Ellie Dehn, David Pershall, J’Nai Bridges, Hye Jung Lee, Elliot Madore, and Paul Appleby. What does it take to be an *Emerging Star*? In the Shrems’ view, a beautiful voice, a good ear, strong acting skills, and the ability to perform from the heart. At the end of the 2017–18 season, one artist will be selected for his or her superlative season performance by a process that includes the general public.

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.”



Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem



Top: Maria Manetti Shrem and Jan Shrem

Bottom: Maria Manetti Shrem, Renée Fleming, and Jan Shrem

ZOE LONERGAN



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SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

2017–18 REPERTORY

TURANDOT

Giacomo Puccini

September 8, 12, 15, 21, 24, 30; November 18, 25, 28;

December 3, 6, 9

Production made possible, in part, by:

Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey;

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn; Bernard & Barbro Osher;

Burgess & Elizabeth Jamieson;

Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem; San Francisco Opera Guild;
and United Airlines.

ELEKTRA

Richard Strauss

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

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

LA TRAVIATA

Giuseppe Verdi

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

Production made possible, in part, by Chevron.

MANON

Jules Massenet

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

Production made possible, in part, by

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn; and Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem.

GIRLS OF THE GOLDEN WEST

WORLD PREMIERE

Music by John Adams

Libretto by Peter Sellars

November 21, 24, 26, 29; December 2, 5, 7, 10

Production made possible, in part, by:

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn; Bertie Bialek Elliott;

Jane Bernstein & Bob Ellis; Leslie & George Hume;

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation;

and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG

Richard Wagner

June 12–17, June 19–24, June 26–July 1

Production of the *Ring* made possible, in part, by:

Dr. & Mrs. William M. Coughran; Bertie Bialek Elliott;

Keith & Priscilla Geeslin; John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn;

Sylvia & John Hughes; Edmund W. & Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund;

Bernard & Barbro Osher; Betty & Jack Schafer;

Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem;

The Thomas Tilton Production Fund; Barbara A. Wolfe;

and United Airlines.

Major support also provided by:

The Conductors Fund, the Emerging Stars Fund, and

the Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund,

all established by Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem.

The Great Singers Fund, established by Joan & David Traitel

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CHRISTINE ALCINO

John Adams

GIRLS OF THE GOLDEN WEST

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Matthew Shilvock,
General Director

Nicola Luisotti,
Music Director
Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair



This production is made possible, in part, by:
John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn; Bertie Bialek Elliott;
Jane Bernstein & Bob Ellis; Leslie & George Hume;
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation;
and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Ms. Bullock, Mr. Tines, Mr. Appleby, Ms. Lee, Mr. McKinny,
Ms. Bridges, and Mr. Madore's appearances are made possible by
the Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem Emerging Stars Fund.

Additional funding is provided by:
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and Norby Anderson.

The November 29 performance is sponsored by United Airlines.

The December 5 performance is sponsored by Meyer Sound.

SYNOPSIS

GIRLS OF THE GOLDEN WEST

The events and characters in the opera are drawn from miners' ballads, the letters of the writer Louise Clappe ("Dame Shirley"), the diary of Ramón Gil Navarro, the memoirs of fugitive slaves, poems by Chinese immigrants (Songs of Gold Mountain), Shakespeare, Mark Twain, the Argentine poet Alfonsina Storni, a speech by Frederick Douglass, biographies of Lola Montez, and the works of the preeminent 19th-century California historians Hubert Howe Bancroft and Josiah Royce. Most of the incidents depicted actually occurred during the Gold Rush, in 1851, in Rich Bar and in Downieville, on the first Fourth of July in the new state of California.

ACT I

Scene 1: On the Road to the Sierra The hard-luck miner Clarence epitomizes the "driving, vigorous, restless population" of young men invading Gold Country. Recently arrived from New England, Dame Shirley rides a mule on her way to Rich Bar with her husband Fayette. She is an enthralled and astute observer of landscapes and people, and one of the rare women in these parts. After falling off her mule, she transfers to a wagon driven by the fugitive slave Ned Peters, now a Black cowboy moving west.

Scene 2: Encounter with Indian Women Dame Shirley and Ned are haunted by an unexpected sighting of a group of Indian women. Dame Shirley describes them as "wretched creatures" and "Macbethian witches" and is both challenged and moved by their nakedness, the beauty of their limbs, and the warm, unguarded look in their eyes.

Scene 3: Rich Bar At the bar of the Empire Hotel, the miner Joe Cannon sings his heart out, telling his friends the story of his girlfriend in Missouri, who threw him over for a butcher with red hair. Ah Sing, a vivacious young Chinese prostitute, helps him forget his sorrows. She sizes him up and decides he is the perfect man to help her realize her future ambitions. Panicking in the face of her expectations, Joe runs out into the night.

Scene 4: Late Night at the Empire The miners are totally addicted to gambling, making fortunes, and hopelessly ruining themselves, night after night. Ramón and Josefa work the tables. He deals, she is there to attract the crowd: "Without a girl, there can be no hotel, without a beautiful one, there can be no business." Joe is a particularly drunk, aggressive customer and his crude advances towards Josefa trigger an ugly incident. Josefa and Ramón remember an afternoon far outside the city when their love was dangerous, fresh, and unobserved.

Scene 5: Coronation Dinner Shirley describes her tiny, primitive log cabin, royally appointed with discarded cans, bottles, boards, and claret cases. Ah Sing appears in a new dress, in a new apartment. When she was a little girl, she was sold for \$10, and now she has bought her freedom for \$700. Joe, her dream husband, will make a future possible. Ned prepares a "coronation dinner" for Shirley, "the Queen." Shirley is overwhelmed with the stature and bearing of this profound and beautiful man.

ACT II

Scene 1: The Raven Himself The Fourth of July in Downieville begins with the miners performing Shakespeare's *Macbeth* with the role of Lady Macbeth assayed by Dame Shirley herself. Money rains upon the stage as miners throw nuggets and gold dust. An Independence Day fandango cloaks the plot of white miners to massacre large numbers of Mexicans, Chileans, and Peruvians. Many Mexicans have already left town, giving up their claims. This is California, "a land made up of strange things, of random luck, and cruel magic."

Scene 2: Downieville Fourth of July As screams are heard from Mexicans being clubbed and robbed by Americans, Ah Sing steps

up to the holiday stage to sing her ballad. She has come to America looking for a rich husband, and is determined to one day save enough money to buy a farm. Joe Cannon is proud to be openly acknowledged as her secret husband, but is then suddenly afraid. As Joe escapes, the angry crowd turns on Ah Sing and her Asian friends, yelling, "Get out, yellow skins, get out." Clarence tries to defuse the crisis, presenting the glamorous and shameless dancer Lola Montez, performing her notorious "Spider Dance."

Scene 3: The Whipping *Macbeth's* "Is this a dagger I see before me?" soliloquy becomes a vivid reality for Clarence, as he contemplates mass murder. Josefa can hear cries and shouts outside her cabin. A group of Chileans are whipped, their heads shaved, and their ears cut off by vigilantes. Dame Shirley is repulsed by the violence. Ned, in indignation and righteous fury, rises up to address the mob.

Scene 4: The Stabbing Dame Shirley pleads for Ned's life before he is taken away. She is left to lament the loss of her only true friend, whose beautiful voice will never be heard again in these mountains. Josefa asks her lover Ramón to stay with her. She feels the weight of the world on her heart, a world that is exploding around her. She knows she and Ramón are targets, and that she will not live long. Ramón asks her to marry him. Josefa repeats over and over to Ramón that she is not allowed to cry. Her father and grandfather never cried. Joe Cannon arrives, drunk and lost in the dark. Ah Sing is out in the night, looking for him. Joe, fully armed, rips through the cloth door of Ramón and Josefa's cabin and drags Josefa away. He tries to rape her. Locked in a violent struggle, Josefa stabs him with his own knife. He dies within hours.

Scene 5: The Hanging A mob gathers around Josefa's cabin. She faces them, calm, dignified, beautifully dressed, wearing her finest jewelry. At her hasty trial, no one speaks up to defend her. She asks God to forgive her persecutors. She is condemned to death. The entire town is present for the lynching.

Epilogue On her last day at Rich Bar, Dame Shirley surveys the detritus of sardine cans, jars, and broken bottles that line the riverbanks, all dusted with a light covering of snow. She lifts her eyes to behold the purple beauty and majesty of the old mountains and "the wonderful and never-enough-to-be-talked-about sky of California" which "drops down upon the whole in fathomless splendor."

Personnel: 7 principal singers, 1 principal dancer, 26 male choristers, 11 supernumeraries, 4 corps dancers; **49 total**

Orchestra: 3 flutes (1 doubling on piccolo), 2 oboes, 1 English horn, 2 clarinets (1 doubling E-flat clarinet), 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets (1 doubling piccolo trumpet), 3 trombones, 2 percussion (cowbells, almglocken, bass drum, snare drum, whip, cymbals, tam-tam, temple blocks), 1 piano, 1 guitar, 1 accordion, 40 strings; **67 total**

Conductor
Grant Gershon*

Director
Peter Sellars

Set Designer
David Gropman*

Costume Designer
Rita Ryack*

Lighting Designer
James F. Ingalls

Choreographer
John Heginbotham*

Sound Designer
Mark Grey

Associate Set Designer
Reid Thompson*

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Dance Master
Lawrence Pech

Fight Director
Dave Maier

Assistant Directors
Roy Rallo
Shawna Lucey

Assistant Conductor
Joseph Marcheso

Musical Preparation
John Churchwell, Laura Poe,
Maureen Zoltek, Fabrizio Corona

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24 AT 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26 AT 2 PM
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 AT 7:30 PM
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2 AT 7:30 PM
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5 AT 7:30 PM
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7 AT 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 AT 2 PM

WORLD PREMIERE

Opera in two acts by **John Adams**

Libretto by **Peter Sellars** drawn from original sources

A San Francisco Opera co-commission and co-production with
the Dallas Opera and Dutch National Opera, Amsterdam

GIRLS OF THE GOLDEN WEST

(Sung in English with English supertitles)

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Clarence</i>	Ryan McKinny*
<i>Dame Shirley</i>	Julia Bullock*
<i>Fayette</i>	Kai Brothers
<i>Ned Peters</i>	Davóne Tines*
<i>Joe Cannon</i>	Paul Appleby
<i>Ah Sing</i>	Hye Jung Lee
<i>Ramón</i>	Elliot Madore
<i>Josefa Segovia</i>	J'Nai Bridges
<i>Lola Montez</i>	Lorena Feijóo

Prostitutes; dancing girls; cowboys; Chinese, Chilean, and Mexican miners

* San Francisco Opera debut

ACT I

Rich Bar, California; 1851

—INTERMISSION—

ACT II

Downieville, Fourth of July

The performance will last approximately three hours and 15 minutes.

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, cell phones, and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden. Please turn off and refrain from using all electronic devices.

RICHARD WAGNER

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Cycle 1—June 12–17, 2018

Cycle 2—June 19–24, 2018

Cycle 3—June 26–July 1, 2018

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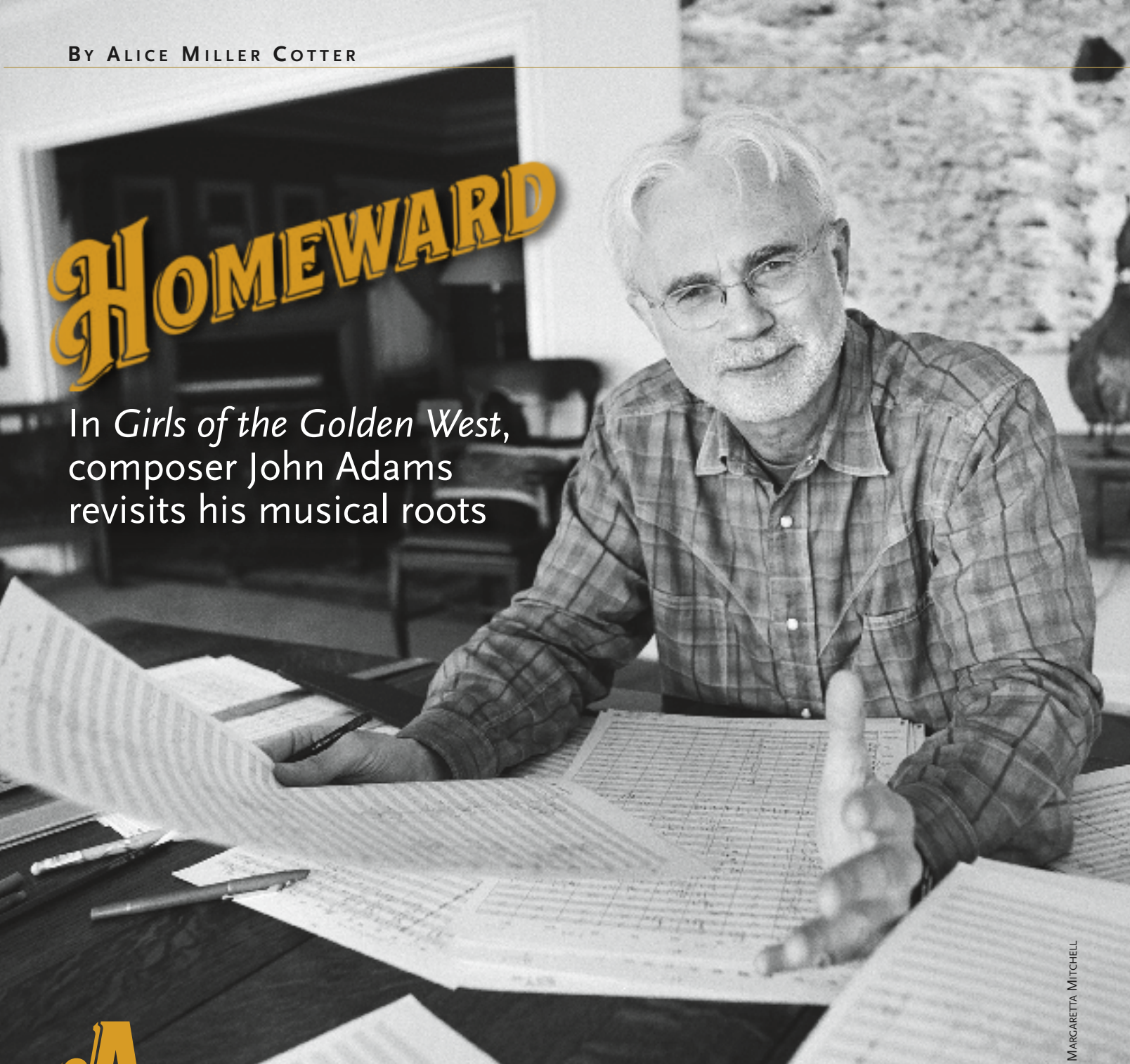
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HOMeward

In *Girls of the Golden West*, composer John Adams revisits his musical roots



MARGARETTA MITCHELL

Airplanes en route from the east to the west coast begin their descent just ahead of the Sierra Nevada range. They soar over the west-slanting mountain slopes above the canyons of California's wild rivers. On a more northerly route you might see Lake Tahoe and the ridges that extend from the Sierra crest to the valley by Marysville, California. Along one of those ridges is a small formation, Haskell Peak, beneath which rests John Adams' cabin, just north of Downieville. In the mid-19th century it was a treeless landscape, thousands of acres logged in the service of gold mining. Nearly two centuries later the scars of mining remain visible, but the trees have grown back and the rivers run clear. In 1976 Adams found himself here, ram-

bling in places where there were no trails over mounded diggings left by gold miners. "I am in my own spiritual territory now," he wrote of the High Sierra in a journal during the summer of 1984.

Adams, who is 70, has composed dozens of orchestral and chamber works, two large-scale oratorios, and five operas that engage topics as wide-ranging as the Nixon-Mao encounter, terrorism, the New and Old Testament, nuclear weapons, ancient Indian folklore, and, now, the experience of women in the mining camps of his beloved Sierra. His musical idiom—subtle and com-

Alice Miller Cotter is a musicologist who specializes in American opera. She is a visiting lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley.



Creative collaborators John Adams and Peter Sellars over the years: from the 1988 Edinburgh Festival rehearsals for *Nixon in China*; a 1987 press conference with *Nixon in China* librettist Alice Goodman at Houston Grand Opera; together again for the 2005 world premiere of *Doctor Atomic* at San Francisco Opera.

plex—is as expansive as the glacial erratics and valley floors of the Pacific Rim. It's also an ideal vehicle for staging histories that continue to inform the present.

In each of their collaborations, Adams and director Peter Sellars chose operatic subjects that seek to make sense of our current world. The interlacing of real blood and larger mythological significance frames the contexts of *Nixon in China* (1987), *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991), and *Doctor Atomic* (2005). For each opera the creators extracted material from news headlines and documentary sources, as well as from ancient and allegorical texts. Adams' scores themselves embrace this tension between immediacy and antiquity. His music can at once suggest striking headline imagery (the exaggerated repetitions of Nixon's "News" aria) and evoke opera's conventional past (the aria as a space for atemporal introspection). Interlocking rhythms and pulsating strings make us conscious of the here and now. But then Adams, too, calls upon archaic musical gestures—ritualistic choruses in *Klinghoffer*, the lament motif in *Doctor Atomic*—to give scope and meaning to the action and characters onstage. His opera texts and music play with the paradox of memory, namely the way the past is updated as new realities unfold.

Many tributaries have informed Adams' compositional approach: a lifetime of listening to jazz, musical theater, and pop music; the models of Wagner, Schoenberg, and Cage; and the landscapes that occupy his memory. He told me, "You know, I can't really think about my music in terms of time's arrow or some sort of evolution that makes perfect sense. I don't even think that Stravinsky's evolution made perfect sense. It went in all these crazy directions. He discovered something and got influenced by Bach and then by Webern and then by Gesualdo." In early works like *Shaker Loops* (1978) Adams began mapping onto his minimalist scaffolds musical fragments drawn from the scores he was teaching or conducting at the time—Mahler, Sibelius, late Beethoven. He became a highly intuitive composer, bound less by labels devised by critics than inside and outside those categories all at once. It was opera, however, that gave his musical style a larger frame.

While composing *Harmonielehre* (1984–85), an orchestral commission by the San Francisco Symphony, Adams developed a harmonic technique that would propel the writing of *Nixon in China*. He realized the potential of the technique in the expressive dimensions of Alice Goodman's libretto. The score for *Nixon* explores the elaboration of consonant surfaces into dissonant reveries alongside events in the text. "You tell everything about the emotional and psychological personality of your characters and about the direction of the action through your use of harmony," he said.

Given opera as a compositional platform, Adams shifted his working methods accordingly. "I discovered that I was driven by the literary impulse. I can't work unless I have a great text," he said. For *Klinghoffer*, Adams let Goodman's imagery of the Achille Lauro event guide the music. He composed specifically to the rhythms of her poetry, always sketching his harmonies first and then setting one word, one phrase at a time. For Adams, this was "the intuitive process at work," reflective of a certain type of presence—contemplative, always intimate—with the material. A decade later while writing *Doctor Atomic*, he, too, closely followed Sellars' libretto, a compilation of documentary sources. The result was a woven tapestry of taped industrial war sounds, swirling musical particles, and darkly hued harmonies that lend the words of J. Robert Oppenheimer and Edward Teller a sense of ambiguity-turned-certainty about impending atrocity. In *El Niño* (2000), *A Flowering Tree* (2006), and *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* (2012), Adams likewise spent his creative energies feeling out the shapes and structures of the texts. He recalled, "Tammy Mumford, who sang in *Other Mary*, sings a passage at the very end describing Mary going into the sepulcher and not finding Jesus. She told me that ending a phrase on 'sepulcher' was the perfect syllable for her to sing that low D-flat. I thought, you know, these things matter so much."

Over the last decade Adams' musical textures have become denser, more complex. In a series of works—*City Noir* (2009), *Absolute Jest* (2012), *Other Mary* (2012), *Saxophone Concerto* (2013), *Scheherazade.2* (2014)—he sustains tension in a manner that departs from earlier styles, saturating his scores with otherworldly orchestral colors and

“My first impulse was that the sound and the orchestration should be as simple and as homely as the tools these miners used.

It wouldn’t have been right to evoke their lives with lavish orchestration or with the sort of high-tech electronic sound world I created for Doctor Atomic.”

fierce lyrical passages. Formal structures get lost in themselves. But in *Girls of the Golden West* (2017), the text—drawn from letters, newspaper sources, and original folk songs of the early 1850s—imparted another musical agenda. “What makes this opera unique for me is the influence of the Gold Rush lyrics, because structurally they’re as simple as can be,” Adams said. “You can’t take language this simple and this frank and set it to overly complex music. It needs to have music that respects its own simplicity. My first impulse was that the sound and the orchestration should be as simple and as homely as the tools these miners used. It wouldn’t have been right to evoke their lives with lavish orchestration or with the sort of high-tech electronic sound world I created for *Doctor Atomic*. I wanted someone banging on a cowbell and the orchestra playing just really simple, stark music. So that ended up being a very large aspect of the piece’s DNA.”

Adams’ embrace of musical simplicity in *Girls of the Golden West* recalls his own descriptions of composing his first opera. “Ever since starting the sketches for *Nixon in China*,” he wrote in December 1985, “I have been aware that the only way to treat this subject is with great simplicity...the ‘simple’ dogma of Mao...the homely emotions of Pat and Dick.” The structural arc of *Nixon* would entail a large-scale transformation of “simple” music—ascending scales and patterned repetitions—into more complex contrapuntal layers. In *Nixon*, he found a dramatic counterpart to his developing style. In *Girls of the Golden West*, he found a dramatic counterpart to a musical language that, in a sense, was like a return home.

Adams’ intimate knowledge of the Sierra inspired more than musical productivity in *Girls of the Golden West*. It encouraged him to observe new details about both the structures of his music and the topography of his Northern California homeland. “You look at the mountain range or the Pacific Crest Trail and you see these ups and downs and flat areas and jagged shapes, and you’re reminded that this is what musical form is: shapes, not in space but in musical time,” he said. Adams originally intended to start the opera with an orchestral panorama inspired by William Brewer’s description of the view from atop Mount Shasta: “a perfect wilderness of mountains extending all the way to the Pacific,” Brewer wrote in the 1860s. But it ended up being the sharp and witty words of Dame Shirley, the pioneer woman whose letters describe the natural beauty of the Sierra and the harsh life of the mining camps, that motivated the composition from beginning to end. “I love Dame Shirley,” Adams said. “I feel like I know her so well: her humor, her incredible humanity, her ability to see something good in a person, the way she describes the Empire Hotel and the crooked boards, the sign and the food that they eat.” She was the muse that got him going.

The etymological origin of the word music stems, of course, from the ancient Greek Muses who represented the arts, inspiration, and all embracing knowledge. It’s no coincidence that the Muses were also the daughters of Memory (Mnemosyne). Through the Shirley letters, Adams located deep in his own memory an old wisdom acquired through years of hiking the crest between the Sierra Buttes and Mount Elwell. “I had to really use my imagination when I wrote *Nixon in China*,” he said, “but I didn’t have to here.” For him, music and memory exist side by side, over the diggings and through the trees. 🌲

From top to bottom: Adams conducting at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.; with Sellars at a rehearsal for Girls of the Golden West; Adams near his cabin by Haskell Peak, circa 1976.



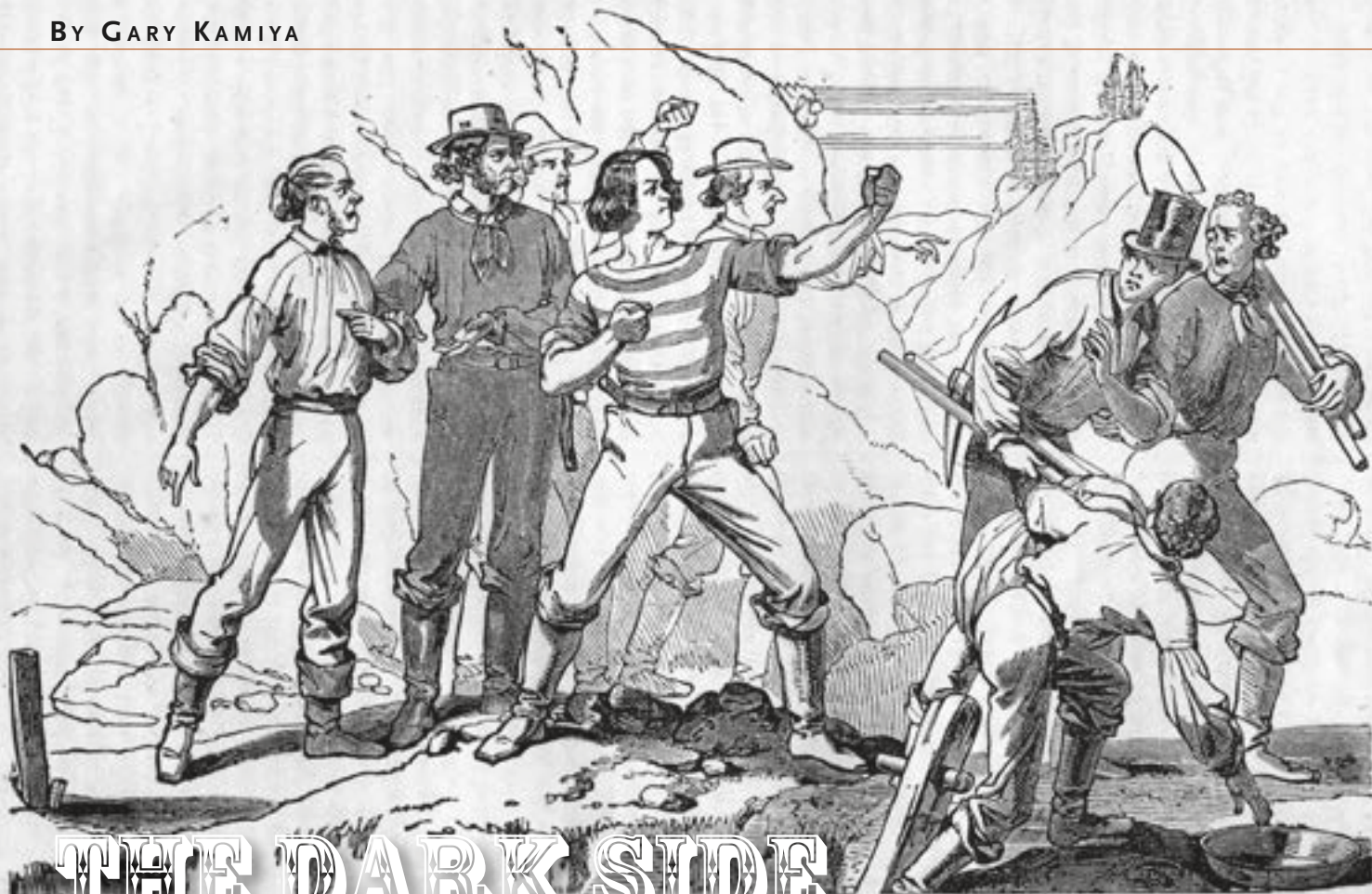
LAMBERT ORRIS



STEFAN COHEN



JOHN ADAMS ARCHIVES



CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE DARK SIDE OF THE GOLD RUSH

The California Gold Rush is one of those rare historical events whose extraordinary intensity at once made it a touchstone of character and brought to the surface deep-seated societal stereotypes and prejudices. Young American men who had had little or no exposure to different cultures, races, or ethnicities suddenly found themselves literally rubbing shoulders in the diggings with Mexicans, blacks, Indians, Chinese, French, Chileans, and others from all over the world. As *Girls of the Golden West* reveals, all too often they responded with a mixture of selfishness and nativism. The philosopher Josiah Royce wrote in his classic 1886 book *California: A Study of American Character*, “Nowhere else, save perhaps as conqueror in Mexico itself, did the American show so blindly and brutally as he often showed in early California his innate intolerance for whatever is stubbornly foreign.”

Actually, relations between the various national and ethnic groups in California were largely peaceful during the first year after gold was discovered in January 1848. This is because, initially, the Gold Rush was really the Gold Trickle. Only about 4,000 Yankees made it to distant California that year, joining 1,300 Californios

(Spanish-speaking residents of California), some Mexicans from the northern states, smaller numbers of Chileans and Peruvians, and a scattering of others. Surface gold was relatively plentiful, the diggings were not too crowded, and life in the mining camps was mostly peaceful. But this Rousseauian phase of the Gold Rush was soon replaced by a more Hobbesian version. In 1848, when President Polk confirmed that there really was gold in California, and the world, including 80,000 Yankees, rushed in, the situation began to take a darker turn. As gold became scarcer and the competition more cutthroat, racism and nativism became increasingly common.

Even before explicit bigotry emerged, the gold fields were hardly a melting pot. Ethnic and racial stereotypes were so commonplace they did not raise an eyebrow: Mexicans were seen as lazy and violent, Chinese clannish and mendacious, blacks intellectually inferior, Jews grasping and averse to physical labor, Irish thuggish and drunken, French sexually depraved, and so on. But these stereotypes did not necessarily run very deep. In the early days of the Gold Rush, many white American miners worked without incident next to Mexicans, blacks, and others. But when the gold got

Yankee encounters with “others” in the diggings— whether Spanish speakers, Indians, Chinese, blacks, or Europeans— all too often ended in unjust expulsions and, sometimes, violence.

scarcer, such prejudices grew stronger. And even when they were not fully believed, they served to justify self-interested actions.

The first victims were Spanish speakers. Many white American miners shared the jingoist sentiments that had become widespread after the recently concluded Mexican-American War, and they were outraged that “foreigners,” mainly Latinos but also French, Chinese and other non-citizens, were taking gold that they thought was rightfully theirs. The first official attempt to exclude Latinos from the gold fields took place in January 1849 in Panama, where 300 Americans found themselves stranded on their way to El Dorado. A rumor spread that “foreign plunderers” from South and Central America had removed \$4 million in gold from California, leaving little for “true citizens” like themselves. A mass meeting was called, after which Gen. Persifor F. Smith, who was headed to Monterey to command the army, issued an illegal declaration stating that any non-citizen who dug for gold on public land would be considered a trespasser. All 300 Americans present supported the declaration.

Anti-Latino sentiments had already begun to run high in the mines, in part because many Mexicans and Chileans had far greater mining expertise than their white counterparts. Smith’s declaration provided legal cover. That spring, vigilantes at Sutter’s Mill drove away large numbers of Mexicans, Chileans, and Peruvians. On the Fourth of July, there was another anti-Latino outburst on the Sacramento River, after which 1,000 victims, mostly Chileans, poured into San Francisco, many headed for home. In fact, Smith’s decree was not only illegal but factually wrong—non-citizens were considered guests and were legally allowed to mine on public lands. Officials disavowed it, but the damage had been done.

The travails of a Californio schoolteacher named Antonio

Coronel were typical. He and his party were successfully prospecting in the foothills, when posters appeared warning “foreigners” to leave the mines. Meanwhile, five foreigners were accused of stealing gold in a nearby camp. Two of them, a Frenchman and a Chilean who were unable to understand a word of the charges against them, were hanged by a drunken mob. The camp thereafter was called Hangtown. It was California’s first lynching. Sadly, as *Girls of the Golden West* shows, it would not be its last.

Coronel and his group headed to a remote river, but even there they were chased off by 100 gringos who announced that the entire riverbed belonged exclusively to Americans who would tolerate no “foreigners.” The Yankees made no distinction between the Californios, some of whose ancestors had arrived in California in 1769, and newly-arrived Mexicans, Chileans, and Peruvians. They lumped them all together as “greasers.”

Anti-foreign and anti-Spanish sentiment culminated in what one historian called “one of the most original if benighted laws ever passed in a California legislature”—the Foreign Miners’ Tax of 1850. This statute, one of the first passed by the California legislature after California became a state, imposed a draconian \$20 a month fee on all foreign miners. Although the fee was later reduced, and the act repealed in 1851, the damage was done; it drove an estimated 10,000 Mexicans from the mines. The bill’s sponsor was a virulent Texas-born racist and state senator named Thomas Jefferson Green, who had been run off the Yuba River because he was using black slaves to mine, and who once said he could “maintain a better stomach at the killing of a Mexican” than at the crushing of a body louse.

California’s native peoples fared even worse than the Spanish-speakers. Yankee miners exploited them mercilessly as

Left: Charles Nahl’s 1856 illustration “Bogue Ejecting the Squatters” from the Old Block’s Sketch-Book.

Below: A circa 1849 image of Chinese immigrants working in the gold fields; Mexican immigrant Josefa Segovia was hanged in Downieville, California on July 5, 1851.



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Clockwise from top left: Approximately one-quarter of all cowboys on the western frontier were African American, immortalized in this circa 1880 photograph; born into slavery in 1854, Nat Love became a Wild West legend before dying in Los Angeles in 1921; an 1860 clash of settlers and Native Americans in the Sierra Nevada.

workers, in some cases trading them a cup of sugar for a cup of gold. They were held in complete contempt: one relatively cosmopolitan forty-niner wrote of them, "A more filthy and disgusting class of human beings you cannot well conceive...they seem to be only a few degrees removed from brutes." From such attitudes to cold-blooded slaughter, it was only a short step. As early as 1849, whites began clearing Indians from the diggings, and organized killing expeditions soon followed. Many whites realized that the state's original inhabitants were being dealt with unjustly, but such sentiments were almost always couched in terms of resignation. In an 1851 speech to the state legislature, the first elected governor of California, Peter Burnett, said, "A war of extermination would continue to be waged between the two races until the Indian race becomes extinct." Although Burnett said this was a source of "painful regret," he concluded, "the inevitable destiny of the race is beyond the power and wisdom of man to avert." The genocidal campaigns waged against California Indians over the next three decades, in which men, women, and children were often gunned down like big game in a safari, constitute one of the blackest pages in American history.

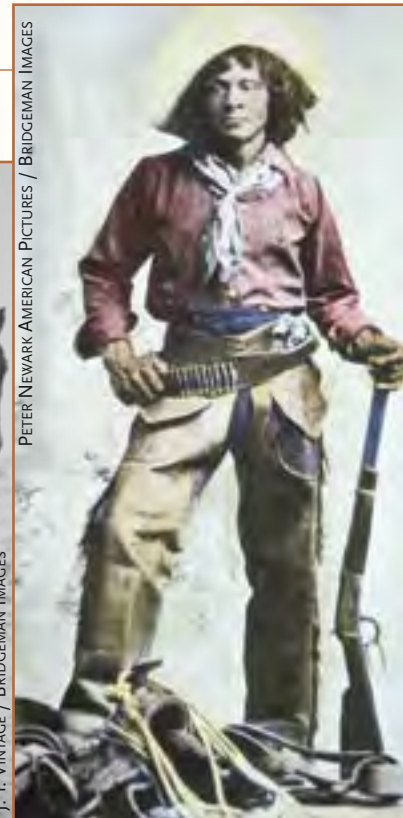
The Chinese, who began mining in large numbers relatively late, were also subject to the dominant prejudices of the time. In this case, however, it might be more accurate to speak of ignorance than of prejudice, at least at first. Most white forty-niners had never met a Chinese person, and had no idea what to make of them. But curiosity soon turned to animosity, again driven by fear of competition, and exacerbated by the huge cultural and linguistic gulf between the two groups. The Chinese tried to avoid direct confrontation with the white miners, but Yankee rage boiled over in 1852, when the people of the southern mining town Columbia held a mass meeting in which they passed resolutions forbidding "these

burlesques on humanity" from mining. Another miner's tax was passed, this time targeting Chinese. Like Latinos and Indians, Chinese were routinely harassed and driven out of the diggings.

Blacks also faced widespread bigotry. California became a free state in 1850, but there were plenty of pro-slavery southerners in the mines. Most white miners were opposed to southerners like Thomas Jefferson Green using slaves in the diggings, but more out of self-interest than moral opposition. The color line that ruled American society did not end in the diggings. Black miners were often confined to segregated boarding houses, and white miners would frequently chase them off their claims. However, the picture could be more nuanced. An English observer wrote, "In the mines the Americans seemed to exhibit more tolerance of Negro blood



J. T. VINTAGE / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES



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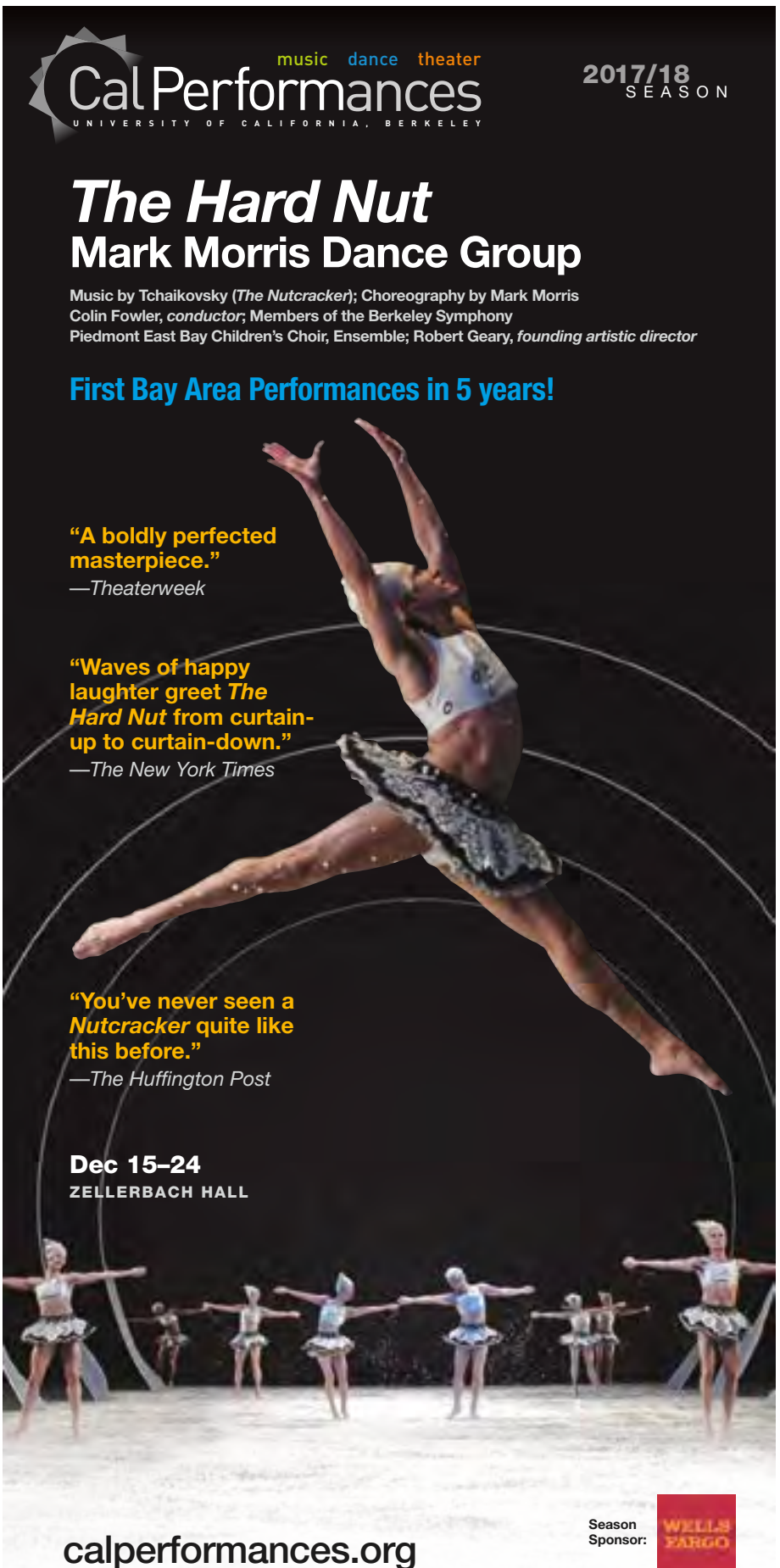
PHOTO © KEN WELSH / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

As gold became
scarcer and the
competition
more cutthroat, racism
and nativism became
increasingly common.

than is usual in the states...owing partly to the exigencies of the unsettled state of society...and to the important fact that a n---r's dollars were as good as any other." Marysville's first saloon and gambling house advertised that it was open to all, "with no regard to distinction of color." Sometimes whites and blacks partnered together; one white family stood up for black miners when a drunken mob tried to drive them out.

It's far from an idyllic picture. Yet as *Girls of the Golden West* eloquently depicts, the Gold Rush was much more than a tale of unrelenting nativism and racism. The prevalence of those dark, all-too-human forces cannot be denied. But to see the Argonauts as a bunch of Ku Klux Klan members with pickaxes would be ahistorical. Like all of us, they were shaped by the attitudes, beliefs, and prejudices of their time, and the anarchic, greed-driven universe of the mining camps allowed those prejudices to blossom. The diggings were a great crucible, a test of character. Some Argonauts failed the test; others proved to be made of the highest mettle; most fell in between. The Gold Rush was a Shakespearean saga, a portrait of humanity in all of its splendor and degradation, its nobility and folly. And the lessons it holds are as important, and painful, in 2017 as they were in 1849. 🌟

Gary Kamiya is the author of *Cool Gray City of Love: 49 Views of San Francisco and the executive editor of San Francisco Magazine*. His history column, "Portals of the Past," appears every other Saturday in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.



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LOUISE CLAPPE AND “DAME SHIRLEY” IN THE GOLDEN WEST



COURTESY OF JIM RAWLS

The cry of “Gold!” in California and its aftermath is a well-told tale. As the word spread, San Francisco—so recently the pueblo called Yerba Buena—experienced “an orgy of growth,” as historian Roger Lotchin saw it. By early 1849 the population was perhaps 2,000; at the start of 1850, it had increased tenfold, and hundreds of ships and smaller vessels crowded the water and wharves. One of these ships, the *Manilla*, arrived in January 1850, heavy with cargo. It carried five passengers from New York.

In this party were Fayette Clapp, 25, a newly trained doctor; his bride of one year, Louise Amelia (Smith) Clapp, 30 (who would eventually spell her name “Clappe”); two of her younger sisters; and Alfred Clapp, a relative of Fayette.

San Francisco was overrun with optimists. Makeshift tents dotted the hillsides, and wooden storefronts, hotels, and boarding houses went up quickly. The family found lodging, and Dr. Clapp welcomed patients. Through the winter and spring of 1850, the family witnessed several devastating fires—possibly arson—which leveled entire city blocks. Louise declared the city “built one day and burnt the next,” a place mad with “the mineral obsession.” People’s intellects grew “languid and dull,” she wrote, “hearing of ‘gold, gold, nothing but gold.’”

Yet the gold mines were not to be avoided. One year in San Francisco was more than enough for Fayette. Cool, rainy winter gave way to foggy, chilly summer. Often the weather or his health seemed to leave him unwell, and soon his new acquaintances began encouraging him to go inland, where it was sunny and drier. Some recommended a new mining camp called Rich Bar, 200 miles to the northeast. A thousand people were already there, but no doctors. Fayette was keen on this news and impatient to depart. Mrs. Clapp agreed that “as the health of his purse was almost as feeble as that of his body, [this] was not a bad idea.”

Fayette left for the Sierra in June 1851, with the understanding that if his health improved and conditions were suitable, he would return for his wife. While she awaited his decision, Louise went to a ranch near Marysville, where she began writing. Soon, Stephen Massett, editor of the *Marysville Herald*, was publishing her essays and poetry. When Dr. Clapp’s letter arrived saying he would come for her, Louise was elated. And she would seize the opportunity to chronicle this event that held the world transfixed. Her education—and fate—made it possible.

Louise was born on July 28, 1819, in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. Her father, Moses Smith of Amherst, Massachusetts, was a distinguished mathematician. In 1827, he and her mother, Lois (Lee) Smith, moved their young family back to Amherst. Tragically, both parents died during the 1830s. Through their estate, Louise completed her formal education.

In 1839, when she was 20, a stagecoach journey brought Louise and the noted editor, diplomat, and “man of letters” Alexander H. Everett (1792–1847) into contact. Conversation led to friendship and exchanges of lengthy letters (sometimes in French) that continued for eight years. Everett’s letters included his travels, public lectures, politics, and especially literature. He encouraged Louise to observe and write. He also sent her his published *Essays and Miscellany* (1845), a volume that included an essay on Mme. de Sévigné of Paris

Above: A possible likeness of Louise Clappe, created from family photographs, including images from the Clappe Collection in the California State Library, Sacramento.

Right: A circa 1864 image of settlers traversing Strawberry Valley in the Sierra Nevada. By the end of the Gold Rush, California’s population soared to 300,000 Americans.

For 15 months, in 23 detailed letters, she vividly, humorously, and compassionately captured every aspect of mining life, from its technology to its ethnic diversity, to drinking and celebrations, fortunes found and squandered, crime and punishment, as well as the wild beauty of the river canyon and the rugged redwood slopes that rose to 6,000 feet above it.

(1626–1696). Everett urged Louise to read de Sévigné’s letters to her daughter, telling his young friend that “the only literature of any value is that which grows indirectly out of the real action of society...”

Alexander Everett died in China in early 1847. Louise preserved his 46 letters all her life. She and Fayette Clapp were married in September 1848.

In September 1851, writing from her log cabin on a branch of the North Fork of the Feather River, Louise chose the nom de plume “Dame Shirley,” created from her childhood nickname and the image of dame as a mature, educated woman. The express man arrived monthly bringing mail and supplies, and left carrying Dame Shirley’s recently composed letters to her sister Mary Jane, “Molly,” in Amherst. For 15 months, in 23 detailed letters, she vividly, humorously, and compassionately captured every aspect of mining life, from its technology to its ethnic diversity, to drinking and celebrations, fortunes found and squandered, crime and punishment, as well as the wild beauty of the river canyon and the rugged redwood slopes that rose to 6,000 feet above it.

The winter of 1852 promised heavy snow. It was time to depart. Louise, transformed by her experience, and Fayette returned to San Francisco. In 1854 she became a school teacher and her “Shirley Letters” appeared serially in a new literary magazine, *The Pioneer*. In 1857, the Clapps divorced.

After retiring from teaching in 1874, Louise moved to New York City, close to her niece Genevieve Stebbins, a pioneer in body language arts. Louise spoke publicly on art, architecture, and literature. Later, as she grew frail, she went to New Jersey, where two nieces of the writer Bret Harte cared for her until her death on February 9, 1906—a few weeks before the great earthquake toppled the city she called home for a quarter-century.

In 1922 her *Shirley Letters from the California Mines, 1851–1852* were published in a fine-press volume by printer Thomas Russell. A decade later, UC Berkeley mining engineer Carl Wheat read and republished them, with commentary, in several editions. With the 1948 California Gold Rush Centennial, more readers, including history students, discovered them. Today they are a primary resource in California history studies.

Louise Amelia Knapp Smith Clappe left us before she would know all this. But in her “Letter Twentieth,” dated September 4, 1852, as she mused on the poetry of John Milton, Dame Shirley reflected that she too would gladly “write something which the world would not willingly let die.” 🌸

Marlene Smith-Baranzini is the editor of The Shirley Letters from the California Mines, 1851–1852 (Heyday).



INVENTING LOLA

“Oh, you must see her! She’s continually new, continually changing, constantly creative!”

So Franz Liszt declared, perfectly describing Ireland-born Eliza Gilbert, now calling herself Lola Montez, a Spanish dancer from Seville, daughter of an impoverished noble Spanish family, widow of a slain war hero.

In 1844, when the hot-tempered beauty seduced Liszt, her pretty feet had twirled her across stages in London, Dresden, Berlin, Warsaw, Danzig, and St. Petersburg, her talent less for dance than notoriety. The brief affair with Liszt ended, rumor had it, when he slipped from the hotel where he and Lola were staying, paid the manager not to unlock the room for twelve hours, and made his getaway.

No matter. Lola, only 23, found bigger fish to fry.

Bavaria’s King Ludwig, instantly besotted, showered her with jewels, money, a mansion, servants. He so adored her feet, she gave him an alabaster model of one on a yellow marble pillow. He wrote her, “Heart of my heart... I covered it in kisses.” He could deny her nothing. When she begged for a title, he gave it. In 1846, Lola became Countess of Landsfeld.

In 1848, she added Mrs. George Heald to her growing list of names by marrying a wealthy young Englishman. His disapproving aunt, pegging Lola for a gold-digger, discovered the bride’s teen-aged marriage to Lt. Thomas James—and a divorce prohibiting remarriage. Charged with bigamy, Lola fled to France.

In 1851, beset by creditors, she sailed for America. Her reputation preceded her. An alarmed Boston newspaper editor wrote: “Thousands of American ladies, it is expected, will rush to see one who possesses in a remarkable degree no artistic talent, and who has acquired notoriety by her shameless dissoluteness of character. The exhibition...is an insult for American society....”

As P. T. Barnum famously said, there’s no such thing as bad publicity. Lola successfully toured the East, then, in 1853, headed for California. Her first week at San Francisco’s American Theatre netted her \$16,000.

One critic, describing her famous spider dance, thought it humorous:

The music, a slow measured but fascinating amalgamation of polka, waltz, march, mazurka and jig, conforms admirably to the step. The spiders accumulate and the danseuse stamps. They appear in myriads—eleven-legged nondescripts with two heads and no eyes; hairy monsters with fire-clawed feelers and nimble shanks. They crawl and sprattle about the stage, invading the fringes of Miladi’s petticoats and taking such unwarrantable liberties that the spectator imagines an inextricable mass of cobwebs and enraged spiders, and would sympathize with the demoiselle, but she seems to take it so easily herself that one quickly jumps to the conclusion that she is enough for them. It is Lola versus the spiders.

After a series of examinations and shaking dresses, she succeeds in getting the imaginary intruders away—apparently stamps daylight out of the last 10,000, and does it with so much naïveté that we feel a sort of satisfaction at the triumph.

The picture winds up with Lola’s victory, and she glides from the stage overwhelmed with applause, and smashed spiders, and radiant with particolored skirts, smiles, graces, cobwebs and glory.

Next stop: Mission Dolores, to marry an American she’d met aboard ship, Patrick Purdy Hull. The 33-year-old bride advised the officiating priest that her name was Maria Dolores Eliza Rosana Landsfeld Heald and her age was 27.

In Sacramento, beginning her tour of California’s interior, raucous laughter greeted Lola’s performance. She angrily signaled the conductor to stop the music, then scolded her audience: “Give me your trousers and take my skirts, you’re not fit to be called men!” They hooted her from the stage. The next night she received enthusiastic applause, but the local newspaper editor was suspicious: “The house might be called full, but in looking it over we could distinguish only a few, a very few, of our citizens present. To strangers, impelled by mere curiosity, and the free use of free tickets, is she indebted for an audience.”

Insulted, Lola challenged him to a duel. Ignored, she continued on to Marysville, and then to Grass Valley, where she ended her tour, bought a cottage on Mill Street, and sent Patrick Purdy Hull packing with the wish that he “trouble her no more.” For two years, likely her happiest, she gardened, collected pets, enjoyed mountain outings, hosted traveling performers and children’s Christmas parties. The blue-eyed beauty, once famously fond of threatening critics with pistols and horsewhips endeared herself to the townspeople with kindness and philanthropy.

Then, restless again, she left for Australia where she performed in Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide. On her return, the accidental shipboard death of her young manager apparently sapped the last of Lola’s flamboyance. Following a brief visit to California she went East where, embracing spiritualism, she parlayed her ability at charming curtain speeches into a final career as a touring lecturer.

While living in reduced circumstances in New York she suffered a stroke, followed by pneumonia. The illness took her from life’s stage in January of 1861. She was 40 years old. The once infamously renowned Lola Montez is buried in Brooklyn, beneath a headstone bearing an incorrect birthdate and a name she never used: Mrs. Eliza Gilbert.



Lola Montez, aka the Countess of Landsfeld, in a painting commissioned by Bavaria’s King Ludwig I.

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JoAnn Levy is the author of *They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush and other titles.*

Background: *Lola Montez Dancing in Front of King Ludwig I* MUSÉE DE LA VILLE DE PARIS, MUSÉE CARNAVALET, PARIS, FRANCE / ARCHIVES CHARMET / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

ARTIST PROFILES



JOHN ADAMS

(Worcester, Massachusetts)
Composer

As a composer, conductor, and creative thinker, John Adams occupies a unique position in the world of American music. His works, both operatic and symphonic, stand out among contemporary classical compositions for their depth of expression, brilliance of sound, and the profoundly humanist nature of their themes. Works spanning more than three decades have entered the repertoire and are among the most performed of all contemporary classical music, among them *Harmonielehre*, *Shaker Loops*, *Chamber Symphony*, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, and his Violin Concerto. His stage works, all in collaboration with director Peter Sellars, include *Nixon in China* (1987), *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991), *El Niño* (2000), *Doctor Atomic* (2005), *A Flowering Tree* (2006), and the Passion oratorio *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* (2012). Adams received the 1993 Grawemeyer Award for his Violin Concerto, as well as the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for composing *On the Transmigration of Souls*, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic to commemorate the first anniversary of 9/11. He has been awarded honorary doctorates from Harvard, Yale, Northwestern University, Cambridge University, the Juilliard School, and the Royal Academy of Music, where he has recently been appointed as a Visiting Professor of Composition. A provocative writer, he is author of the highly-acclaimed autobiography *Hallelujah Junction* and is a contributor to the *New York Times Book Review*. As a conductor, Adams appears with the world's major orchestras in programs combining his own works with a wide variety of repertoire ranging from Beethoven and Mozart to Ives, Carter, Zappa, Glass, and Ellington. In recent seasons, he has conducted the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the orchestras of Seattle, Cincinnati, Atlanta, and Toronto. Adams is currently Creative Chair of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Recent recordings of his work include the podcast

album *Splitting Adams* by Alarm Will Sound and Q2 Music's "Meet the Composer" podcast, featuring *Chamber Symphony* and *Son of Chamber Symphony* alongside interview tracks; *Scheherazade.2* with Leila Josefowicz and the St. Louis Symphony on Nonesuch Records; the Deutsche Grammophon release of *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* featuring the Los Angeles Philharmonic; *City Noir* and Saxophone Concerto with the St. Louis Symphony; the Grammy Award-winning album featuring *Harmonielehre* and *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* and the premiere recording of *Absolute Jest* paired with *Grand Pianola Music*, both with the San Francisco Symphony; and the Nonesuch DVD of the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Nixon in China* conducted by the composer.



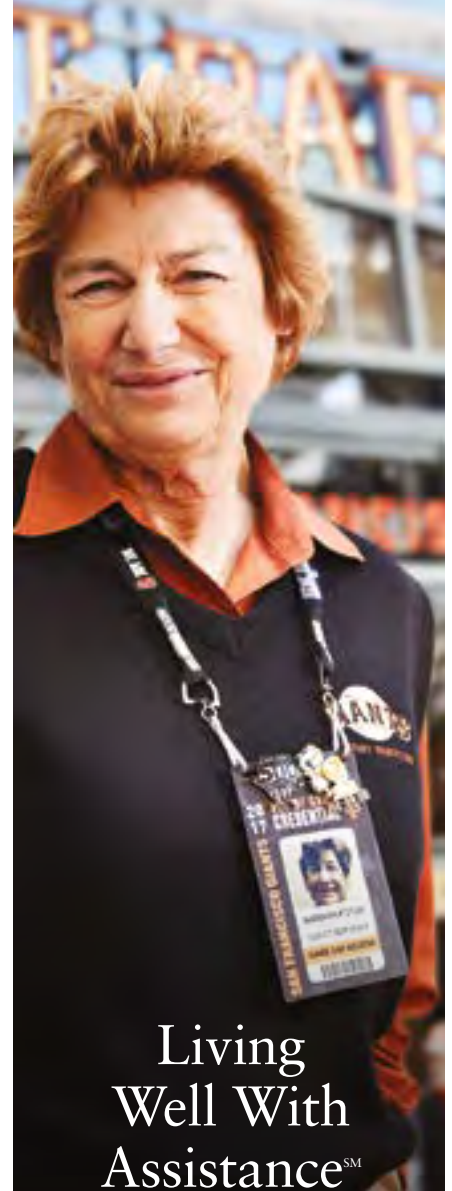
JULIA BULLOCK

(St. Louis, Missouri)
Dame Shirley

Soprano Julia Bullock makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Dame Shirley in the world premiere of *Girls of the Golden West*. Later this season, she joins Dutch National Opera in Simon McBurney's production of *The Rake's Progress*, makes a Santa Fe Opera debut as Kitty Oppenheimer in a new Peter Sellars production of John Adams' *Doctor Atomic*, and performs in a North American recital tour to Atlanta, Berkeley, Boston, Kansas City, and New York, among other cities. Recent highlights include concerts with Gustavo Dudamel leading the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Andris Nelsons and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Marin Alsop and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Alan Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic, Simon Rattle and the London Symphony Orchestra, David Robertson and the Sydney Symphony, and Michael Tilson Thomas conducting the San Francisco Symphony. Bullock has recorded *Doctor Atomic*, conducted by the composer, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and garnered wide international recognition in the title role of *The Indian Queen* at the Perm Opera House, the Bolshoi, and Teatro Real. Shaped by artistic partner Peter Sellars, truly inspired performances were achieved in summer 2016 at the Ojai Music Festival with Roomful of Teeth and the International Contemporary Ensemble



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in Kaija Saariaho's *La Passion de Simone* and in the world premiere of *Josephine Baker: A Portrait*, composed and arranged by Tyshawn Sorey with accompanying poetry by Claudia Rankine.



DAVÓNE TINES
(Orlean, Virginia)

Ned Peters

Bass-baritone Davóne Tines' performances in the 2017–18 season include his San Francisco Opera debut in John Adams'

Girls of the Golden West, a debut at the Opéra National de Paris in Kaija Saariaho's *Only the Sound Remains*, and a Brooklyn Academy of Music debut in *Crossing* by Matthew Aucoin. Other appearances of the season encompass *Oedipus Rex* at the Baltic Sea Festival conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen and both *Das Paradies und die Peri* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Los Angeles Philharmonic led by Gustavo Dudamel. Past highlights include Adams' *El Niño* with the London Symphony Orchestra as well as with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Saariaho's *True Fire* with the Orchestre National de France, and a program exposing the Music of Resistance by Crumb, Eastman, Shaw, and Shostakovich with conductor Christian Reif leading members of the San Francisco Symphony at SoundBox. On the opera stage, Tines made debuts at Lisbon's Teatro Nacional de São Carlos in *Oedipus Rex* led by Leo Hussain and at the Finnish National Opera in *Only the Sound Remains* directed by Peter Sellars. National Sawdust brought to the stage *Requiem for: A Tuesday*, a ceremony of music and dance created and administered by Davóne Tines with his collaborator, Helga Davis, during which the audience was invited to witness and face collective and individual engagements of mortality and fear in the context of racialized police brutality. Tines graduated from Harvard University and received a Master of Music degree from the Juilliard School.



PAUL APPLEBY
(South Bend, Indiana)
Joe Cannon

Following a summer season that featured Paul Appleby in his Festival d'Aix-en-Provence debut as Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress* by director Simon McBurney, the tenor returns to San Francisco Opera for the world premiere of *Girls of the Golden West*. Later in the 2017–18 season, he performs at Dutch National Opera, revisiting McBurney's production of *The Rake's Progress*. On the stage of the Metropolitan Opera, the tenor has bowed as Tom Rakewell, Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and in the lead role of Brian in the North American premiere of Nico Muhly's *Two Boys*. Highlights from recent seasons also include Bénédic in *Béatrice et Bénédic* at the Palais Garnier, Jonathan in a new production of *Saul* at the Glyndebourne Festival, Fritz in *The Grand Duchess of Gérolstein* at the Santa Fe Opera, and Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* at Canadian Opera Company. He has collaborated with many of the world's leading conductors including Gustavo Dudamel, Manfred Honeck, James Levine, Riccardo Muti, and David Zinman. Appleby made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2015 as Tamino in *The Magic Flute*.



HYE JUNG LEE
(Seoul, Korea)
Ah Sing

Korean soprano Hye Jung Lee made her San Francisco Opera debut as Madame Mao in John Adams' *Nixon in China*. She returned to the Company the following year to sing Olympia in *Tales of Hoffmann*. In 2015, Lee joined the ensemble of Theater Kiel in Germany where she has performed Gilda from *Rigoletto*, Zerbinetta from *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Queen of the Night from *Die Zauberflöte*, Susanna from *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Ortlinde from *Die Walküre*, Amor from *Orphée et Eurydice*, and Woglinde from *Das Rheingold*, among other roles. Recent seasons have also taken her to New Zealand Opera for Madame



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Sulwhasoo



Operatic Paintings

by Barbara Fracchia



Manon
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Mao and Saarländisches Staatstheater in Saarbrücken for *Queen of the Night*. Other career highlights include the role of Papagena from *Die Zauberflöte*, Lisa from *La Sonnambula* at Florida Grand Opera, and *Queen of the Night* at Dayton Opera. Lee has appeared as a soloist in Mozart's *Mass in C minor* in 2009 with the St. Cecilia Orchestra and Chorus at Issac Stern Auditorium in Carnegie Hall. The following year, she returned to Carnegie Hall, singing as a soloist in Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. An alumna of the Merola Opera Program, Lee is a graduate of Indiana University, Seoul National University, and the Mannes College of Music. In 2013, she was a national semifinalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.



RYAN MCKINNY

(Los Angeles, California)

Clarence

Performing for the first time at San Francisco Opera as Clarence in *Girls of the Golden*

West, bass-baritone Ryan McKinny recently performed as Richard Nixon in John Adams' *Nixon in China* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Amfortas in *Parsifal* at the Bayreuth Festival, and Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolles* with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony in celebration of the composer's 100th birthday. Last season, he returned to Washington National Opera as Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Hawaii Opera Theatre as Stanley Kowalski in André Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Houston Grand Opera as Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*. Other recent engagements include Donner and Gunther in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at Washington National Opera, his first European performances of the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer*, the title role of *Rigoletto* at Houston Grand Opera, Jochanaan in *Salome* at the Santa Fe Opera and New Orleans Opera, and Stanley Kowalski to Renée Fleming's Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* at Los Angeles Opera. In the 2017–18 season, he makes his role debut as Mandryka in a new production of *Arabella* at Staatstheater

Wiesbaden, returns to the Santa Fe Opera as J. Robert Oppenheimer in John Adams' *Doctor Atomic*, and makes his role debut in the title role of *Eugene Onegin* at Hawaii Opera Theatre.



J'NAI BRIDGES

(Lakewood, Washington)

Josefa Segovia

Having made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2016 as Bersi in *Andrea Chénier*, mezzo-soprano

J'Nai Bridges is quickly becoming one of the most sought-after talents of her generation. Season highlights include her return to San Francisco Opera in the world premiere of John Adams' *Girls of the Golden West* and engagements with Opera Zürich, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, BBC Symphony, and Kalamazoo Symphony. Past engagements include leading roles at the Los Angeles, Vancouver, San Diego, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Wolf Trap Operas and soloist engagements with the NDR Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, and Oregon Symphony. Bridges has received a 2018 Sphinx Medal of Excellence and a 2016 Richard Tucker Career Grant, won the 2016 Francisco Viñas and 2015 Gerda Lissner Competitions, and represented the U.S. at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition. She is an alumna of the Curtis Institute of Music and Manhattan School of Music. In 2016, Bridges completed a three-year residency with the distinguished Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Highlights of her tenure there included Ines in *Il Trovatore*, Vlasta in Mieczysław Weinberg's *The Passenger*, Flora in *La Traviata*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Carmen in the world premiere of *Bel Canto* by Jimmy López.

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**ELLIOT MADORE**

(Toronto, Canada)

Ramón

Baritone Elliot

Madore made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2015 as

Anthony Hope in *Sweeney Todd*. His

recent engagements include Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette* with the Metropolitan Opera and Santa Fe Opera; Reinaldo Arenas in the world premiere of Jorge Martin's *Before Night Falls* at Florida Grand Opera; Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande* with Munich's Bavarian State Opera; Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City; Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Zurich, Munich, and Paris; Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* with the Metropolitan Opera; and the title role of *Don Giovanni* with Opera Philadelphia, the Glyndebourne Festival, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. During the 2017–18 season, he appears as Germano in *La Scala di Seta* at Zurich Opera, The Cat/Grandfather Clock in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* with the Berlin Philharmonic, and as Pelléas with the Bremen Kammerphilharmonie. He also returns to the Tanglewood Music Festival to sing Bernstein's *Songfest* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

**LORENA FEIJÓO**

(Havana, Cuba)

Lola Montez

Making her San Francisco Opera debut last month as Solo Dancer in *La Traviata*, award-winning dancer

Lorena Feijóo trained at Escuela Nacional de Ballet de Cuba. She performed with Ballet Nacional de Cuba, Ballet of Monterrey, Royal Ballet of Flanders, and the Joffrey Ballet before joining San Francisco Ballet as a principal dancer in 1999. As a guest artist, Feijóo has performed extensively, including pas de deux from *Don Quixote* at the Benois de la Danse Gala at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow in 2011; Garcia's *Majismo* at the American Ballet Theatre gala honoring José Manuel Carreño in 2011; and in American Conservatory Theater's *The Tosca Project* in San Francisco in 2010.

**PETER SELLARS**

(Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)

Librettist and Director

Peter Sellars is one of the most powerful forces in the performing arts, known for

groundbreaking interpretations of classic works. Whether it is Mozart, Handel, Shakespeare, Sophocles, or the 16th-century Chinese playwright Tang Xianzu, Peter Sellars strikes a universal chord with audiences. Sellars has staged operas at the Glyndebourne Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Netherlands Opera, Opéra National de Paris, Salzburg Festival, San Francisco Opera, Metropolitan Opera, and the Santa Fe Opera, among others, establishing a reputation for bringing 20th-century and contemporary operas to the stage, including works by Olivier Messiaen, Paul Hindemith, and György Ligeti. Inspired by the compositions of Kaija Saariaho, Osvaldo Golijov, and Tan Dun, he has guided the creation of productions of their work that have expanded the repertoire of modern opera. Sellars has been a driving force in the creation of many new works with longtime collaborator composer John Adams, including *Nixon in China*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, *El Niño*, *Doctor Atomic*, *A Flowering Tree*, and *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*. Recent projects include a production of *The Indian Queen*, combining Purcell's music, text, and dance, and a concert staging of *Pelléas et Mélisande* with the Berlin Philharmonic. In 2015 Sellars collaborated with flex dance pioneer Reggie Gray and a group of 21 dancers from the New York City flex community to create *Flexn*, a powerful work confronting issues of social injustice in America. Recent projects included the 70th anniversary of the Ojai Music Festival for which Sellars was music director, a concert staging of Orlando di Lasso's *Lagrime di San Pietro* with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Salzburg Festival. Sellars is a professor in the Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA and Resident Curator of the Telluride Film Festival. He is the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, the Erasmus Prize, the Sundance Institute Risk-Takers Award, and the Gish Prize, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts

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and Sciences. He was recently honored by the American Academy in Rome and *Opera News* magazine.

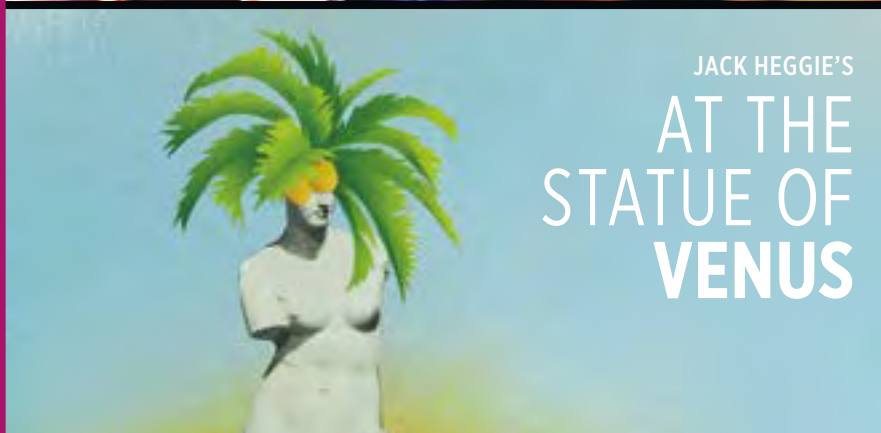


GRANT GERSHON
(Alhambra, California)
Conductor
Currently in his seventeenth season as the artistic director of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Grant Gershon

is making his San Francisco Opera conducting debut with John Adams' *Girls of the Golden West*. An ardent champion of new music, he has given numerous world premiere performances of works by Steve Reich, Christopher Rouse, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Louis Andriessen. He has also premiered works by John Adams, Ricky Ian Gordon, Billy Childs, Shawn Kirchner, Nackkum Paik, and Don Davis, and has given American premieres of works by Meredith Monk, Henryk Górecki, Thomas Jennefelt, James MacMillan, Tarik O'Regan, and Mark-Anthony Turnage, among others. As resident conductor of Los Angeles Opera, Gershon led the world premiere performances in 2010 of Daniel Catán's *Il Postino*, conducted *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* in a 2011 co-production featuring the Mark Morris Dance Group, and led *Madama Butterfly* in 2012, *Carmen* in 2013, and *Florencia en el Amazonas* in 2014. Among other highlights, he conducted in 2013 John Adams' *The Gospel According to The Other Mary* with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, the Chicago Philharmonic Orchestra, and the original cast of soloists at the Ravinia Festival; made his Santa Fe Opera debut in 2011, conducting Peter Sellars' new production of Vivaldi's *Griselda*; and conducted Minnesota Opera's world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Grapes of Wrath* and led subsequent performances of the work with Utah Opera. Most recently, he led performances of *The Pearl Fishers*, *Wonderful Town*, *Tosca*, and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at Los Angeles Opera; John Adams' *El Niño* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and appeared with the San Francisco Symphony and National Symphony Orchestra.



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DAVID GROPMAN
(Los Angeles,
California)

Set Designer

Making his San Francisco Opera debut in *Girls of the Golden West*, set designer David

Gropman received his B.A. degree from San Francisco State University and M.F.A. from Yale School of Drama in stage design. Broadway and Off Broadway credits include *The 1940s Radio Hour*, *Mass Appeal*, *Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music*, *True West*, and *Buried Child*. He also designed the world premiere of Leonard Bernstein's opera *A Quiet Place* and several pieces for the Paul Taylor Dance Company and regional theaters across the country. In 1982, he designed Robert Altman's Broadway directorial debut, *Come Back to the 5 and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*. When Altman asked him to design the film version, he began his career as a production designer. In addition to designing three films for Altman, he has enjoyed numerous collaborations with directors Lasse Hallström, Robert Benton, Steven Zaillian, Gary Sinise, James Ivory, Ang Lee, and John Wells. Gropman was an Academy Award nominee for Best Art Direction, shared with set decorator Beth Rubino, for his work on Hallström's *The Cider House Rules*, as well as an Academy Award nominee for Lee's *Life of Pi*. His work most recently appeared in the 2016 film *Fences*, starring Denzel Washington and Viola Davis.



RITA RYACK
(Boston,
Massachusetts)

Costume Designer

Making her San Francisco Opera debut in *Girls of the Golden West*, Rita Ryack earned a B.F.A.

degree at Brandeis University, studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, won a teaching fellowship in costume design at Bennington College, and received an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama. Her first Broadway musical, for which she received a Tony

nomination, was *My One and Only*, directed by Tommy Tune. She was nominated for a second Tony for Harvey Fierstein's *Casa Valentina*, directed by Joe Mantello. She has designed productions on and off Broadway, working with such notable directors as Peter Sellars, Lee Breuer, Robert Brustein, Harry Kondoleon, Lynne Meadow, Jerry Zaks, Dan Sullivan, and Sam Shepard, and for distinguished playwrights Donald Margulies, Christopher Durang, Terence McNally, and Harry Kondoleon. She has been honored with the Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Costume Design. She has worked extensively in regional theater as well, and spent a season as principal costume designer at Robert Brustein's American Repertory Theatre. Martin Scorsese hired Ryack to design her first feature film, *After Hours*, which led to further collaborations with the director. Among her films with Robert DeNiro, she designed *Wag the Dog*, directed by Barry Levinson; *The Fan*, directed by Tony Scott; *Mad Dog and Glory*, directed by John McNaughton, and *A Bronx Tale*, Robert DeNiro's directorial debut. Ryack has designed costumes for six of Ron Howard's films, including *Apollo 13*, *Ransom*, *A Beautiful Mind*, and *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*, the latter of which she received an Academy Award nomination.



JAMES F. INGALLS
(Hartford,
Connecticut)

Lighting Designer

James F. Ingalls returns to San Francisco Opera where he has designed John

Adams' *The Death of Klinghoffer* and *Doctor Atomic*, both directed by Peter Sellars. His designs in the Bay Area include *Hamlet*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Marcus, Or the Secret of Sweet* and *The Invention of Love* for American Conservatory Theatre; *Onegin*, *The 75th Anniversary New Works Festival*, *Sylvia*, *The Nutcracker* and *Silver Ladders* at San Francisco Ballet; *Art Songs* for Alonzo King LINES Ballet; *Layla and Majnun*, *Platée*, *The Hard Nut* and *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, all choreographed by Mark Morris at Cal Performances; and *after the quake*, *Yellowman*, *How I Learned to Drive* and *The Revenger* for Berkeley Repertory Theatre. He often collaborates with The Wooden Floor dancers in Santa Ana.



JOHN HEGINBOTHAM
(Anchorage, Alaska)
Choreographer

Making his San Francisco Opera debut in *Girls of the Golden West*, choreographer and

dancer John Heginbotham graduated from the Juilliard School in 1993, and was a member of the Mark Morris Dance Group from 1998 through 2012. In 2011, he founded Dance Heginbotham (DH), a performance group devoted to the presentation of his dance and theatrical work. The company has been presented and commissioned by Baryshnikov Arts Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Carolina Performing Arts, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Joyce Theater, the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and the Metropolitan Museum of Arts, among others. In February 2017, DH premiered *Lola* at the Kennedy Center, performed with violinist Joshua Bell and the National Symphony Orchestra. In addition to DH, Heginbotham is active as a freelance choreographer. Recent projects include *Candide* with the Orlando Philharmonic (2016), Daniel Fish's Bard Summerscape production of *Oklahoma!* (2015), Angels' Share for Atlanta Ballet (2014), and two projects with Isaac Mizrahi: *The Magic Flute* with the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (2014) and *Peter and the Wolf* for the Guggenheim Museum's Works and Process Series (2013), which has become an annual holiday event. A frequent collaborator, Heginbotham has worked with numerous and diverse artists and ensembles, including Alarm Will Sound, Brooklyn Rider, Raymond Scott Orchestrette, composers Tyondai Braxton, Ethan Iverson, and Colin Jacobsen, vocalists Gabriel Kahane and Shara Nova, puppeteer Amy Trompetter, and artist and author Maira Kalman. He is the recipient of the 2014 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award and a 2017–18 New York City Center Choreography Fellowship.

**MARK GREY**

(San Francisco, California)

Sound Designer

Over two decades as a sound designer, relationships have led Mark Grey to work closely with

such artists and organizations as John Adams, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Terry Riley, Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers, Peter Eötvös, Kronos Quartet, the Paul Drescher Ensemble, and many others. At San Francisco Opera, Grey worked on the 2005 world premiere of Adams' *Doctor Atomic*, as well as the world premiere of Stewart Wallace's *The Bonesetter's Daughter* in 2008 and the 2012 presentation of Adams' *Nixon in China*. Grey made history as the first sound designer for the New York Philharmonic at Avery Fisher Hall (*On the Transmigration of Souls*, 2002) and the Metropolitan Opera (*Doctor Atomic*, 2008; *Nixon in China*, 2011; *The Death of Klinghoffer*, 2014; *The Merry Widow*, 2015; *Bluebeard's Castle/Iolanta*, 2015; *L'Amour de Loin*, 2016). His sound design creations have been seen and heard throughout most major concert halls, HD simulcast theaters, and opera houses worldwide. As a composer, Grey's solo, ensemble, and orchestral music has been performed in many venues, including the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, Théâtre de la Ville in Paris, Barbican Centre in London, Het Muziektheater in Amsterdam, Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall, Philharmonie Hall in Warsaw, UNESCO Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, Symphony Hall in Phoenix, Disney Hall and Royce Hall in Los Angeles, Atlanta Symphony Hall, as well as at the Ravinia, Cabrillo, OtherMinds, Perth International, Great Lakes, and Spoleto festivals. In 2016, his opera *Frankenstein* debuted at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie. A 35-minute symphonic version of the opera has been commissioned and premiered by the Atlanta Symphony and co-commissioned by the Berkeley Symphony.

**IAN ROBERTSON**

(Dundee, Scotland)

Chorus Director

Recipient of the 2012 San Francisco Opera Medal, Ian Robertson has been chorus director and conductor with

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

**LAWRENCE PECH**

(San Francisco, California)

Dance Master

Lawrence Pech is in his 22nd season as dance master and resident choreographer for San

Francisco Opera. He has created period and interpretive dances on more than 60 productions with the Company. Pech received his formal training from American Ballet Theatre (ABT) and was invited by Mikhail Baryshnikov to join that company in 1980. In 1986, he joined San Francisco Ballet, where he became a principal dancer in 1989. Pech founded two of his own dance companies and has choreographed more than 50 ballets, 30 musicals, and numerous self-produced evenings of music and dance around the world.

**DAVE MAIER**

(Great Neck, New York)

Fight Director

Resident fight director for San Francisco Opera, Dave Maier made his Company debut in 2013 with

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

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 Martha Simonds, *Associate Principal*
 Beni Shinohara, *Assistant Principal*
 Eva Karasik
 Maya Cohon
 Leslie Ludena
 Linda Deutsch Twohy†
 Craig Reiss
 Heeguen Song **

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 Sergey Rakitchenkov, *Associate Principal**
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 Patricia Heller
 Jonna Hervig
 Natalia Vershilova
 Joy Fellows

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 Peter Myers, *Assistant Principal*
 Nora Pirquet
 Emil Miland
 Victoria Ehrlich
 Ruth Lane

BASS

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

FLUTE

Julie McKenzie, *Principal*
 Patricia Farrell
 Stephanie McNab

PICCOLO

Stephanie McNab

OBOE

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

ENGLISH HORN

Janet Popesco Archibald

CLARINET

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

BASS CLARINET

Anthony Striplen

BASSOON

Rufus Olivier, *Principal*
 Daniel MacNeill
 Michael Severance

CONTRABASSOON

Michael Severance

HORN

Kevin Rivard, *Co-Principal*
 Mark Almond, *Co-Principal*
 Keith Green
 Brian McCarty
 Lawrence Ragent

TRUMPET

Adam Luftman, *Principal*
 William Holmes†
 Scott Macomber**
 John Pearson

TROMBONE

Samuel Schlosser, *Principal*†
 Jeffrey Budin, *Principal***
 Donald Kennelly
 David Ridge

TUBA/CIMBASSO

Zachariah Spellman

TIMPANI

John Burgardt

PERCUSSION

Richard Kvistad, *Principal/Associate Timpani*
 Patricia Niemi

HARP

Olga Ortenberg-Rakitchenkov

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 Timothy Spears, *Assistant*

ORCHESTRA MANAGER

Tracy Davis
 Timothy Spears, *Assistant*

* Principal for one or more fall season operas

† Leave of absence

** Season substitute

ORCHESTRA



Kay Stern
Concertmaster



Laura Albers
Associate Concertmaster



Heidi Wilcox
Assistant Concertmaster



Jennifer Cho
First Violin



Dawn Harms
First Violin



Mariya Borozina
First Violin



Barbara Riccardi
First Violin



Leonid Igudesman
First Violin



Asuka Annie Yano
First Violin



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



Carla Maria Rodrigues
Principal
Viola



Sergey Rakitchenkov
Associate Principal
Viola



Paul Nahhas
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Bass



Jonathan Lancelle
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Steven D'Amico
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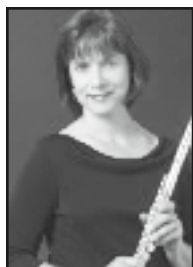


Shinji Eshima
Bass



Mark Drury
Bass

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ORCHESTRA CONTINUED



Julie McKenzie
Principal
Flute



Patricia Farrell
Flute



Stephanie McNab
Flute & Piccolo



Mingjia Liu
Principal
Oboe



Deborah Henry
Assistant Principal
Oboe



Janet Popesco
Archibald
Oboe & English Horn



Deborah Shidler
Oboe
Regular Substitute



Jose Gonzalez
Granero
Principal Clarinet



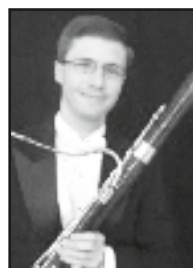
Joanne Burke Eisler
Assistant Principal
Clarinet



Anthony Striplen
Clarinet &
Bass Clarinet



Rufus Olivier
Principal
Bassoon



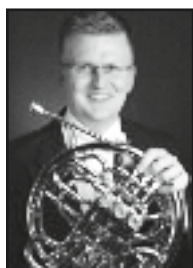
Daniel MacNeill
Bassoon



Michael Severance
Bassoon &
Contrabassoon



Kevin Rivard
Co-Principal
Horn



Mark Almond
Co-Principal
Horn



Keith Green
Horn



Brian McCarty
Horn



Lawrence Ragent
Horn



William Klingelhoffer
Horn
Regular Substitute



Adam Luftman
Principal
Trumpet



William Holmes
Trumpet



John Pearson
Trumpet



Scott Macomber
Trumpet
Regular Substitute



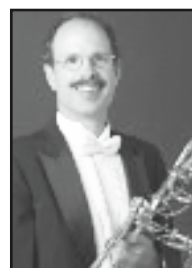
Samuel Schlosser
Principal Trombone



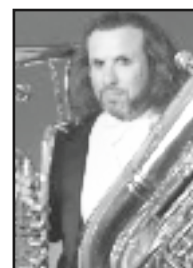
Jeffrey Budin
Principal Trombone
Regular Substitute



Donald Kennelly
Trombone



David Ridge
Trombone &
Bass Trombone



Zachariah Spellman
Tuba/Cimbasso



John Burgardt
Timpani



Richard Kvistad
Principal Percussion &
Associate Timpani



Patricia Niemi
Percussion



Olga Ortenberg
Rakitchenkov
Harp



Tracy Davis
Orchestra Manager



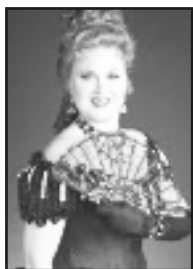
Carrie Weick
Librarian



Timothy Spears
Assistant Orchestra
Manager & Librarian

Most photos by John Martin. Not pictured: Lev Rankov, Dian Zhang, and Jennifer Hsieh, *First Violin* and Maya Cohon, *Second Violin*

REGULAR CHORUS



Kathleen Bayler
Soprano



Sara Colburn
Soprano



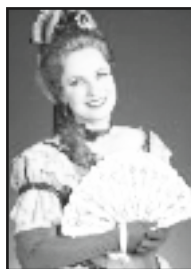
Dvora Djoraev
Soprano



Mary Finch
Soprano



Claire Kelm
Soprano



Elisabeth Rom Lucio
Soprano



Angela Eden Moser
Soprano



Rachelle Perry
Soprano



Virginia Pluth
Soprano



Carole Schaffer
Soprano



Mitzie Kay Weiner
Soprano



Buffy Baggott
Mezzo-Soprano



Roberta Bowman
Mezzo-Soprano



Janet Campbell
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Mouzon
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Munro
Mezzo-Soprano



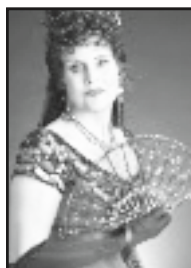
Erin Neff
Mezzo-Soprano



Laurel Porter
Mezzo-Soprano



Laurel Rice
Mezzo-Soprano



Shelley Seitz
Mezzo-Soprano



Claudia Siefer
Mezzo-Soprano



Donna Turchi
Mezzo-Soprano



C. Michael Belle
Tenor



Alan Cochran
Tenor



Chris Corley
Tenor



Daniel Harper
Tenor



Christopher Jackson
Tenor



Michael Jankosky
Tenor



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Tenor



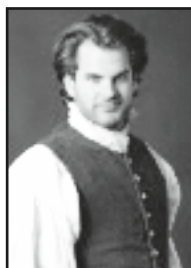
Colby Roberts
Tenor



Sigmund Seigel
Tenor



Dan Stanley
Tenor



Andrew Truett
Tenor



Richard Walker
Tenor

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA REGULAR CHORUS CONTINUED



Torlef Borsting
Baritone



Anders Fröhlich
Baritone



Cameron Henley
Baritone



Ken Johnson
Baritone



David Kekuewa
Baritone



Frederick Matthews
Baritone



Ken Rafanan
Baritone
Leave of Absence



Jere Torkelsen
Baritone



Christopher Filipowicz
Bass



Bojan Knežević
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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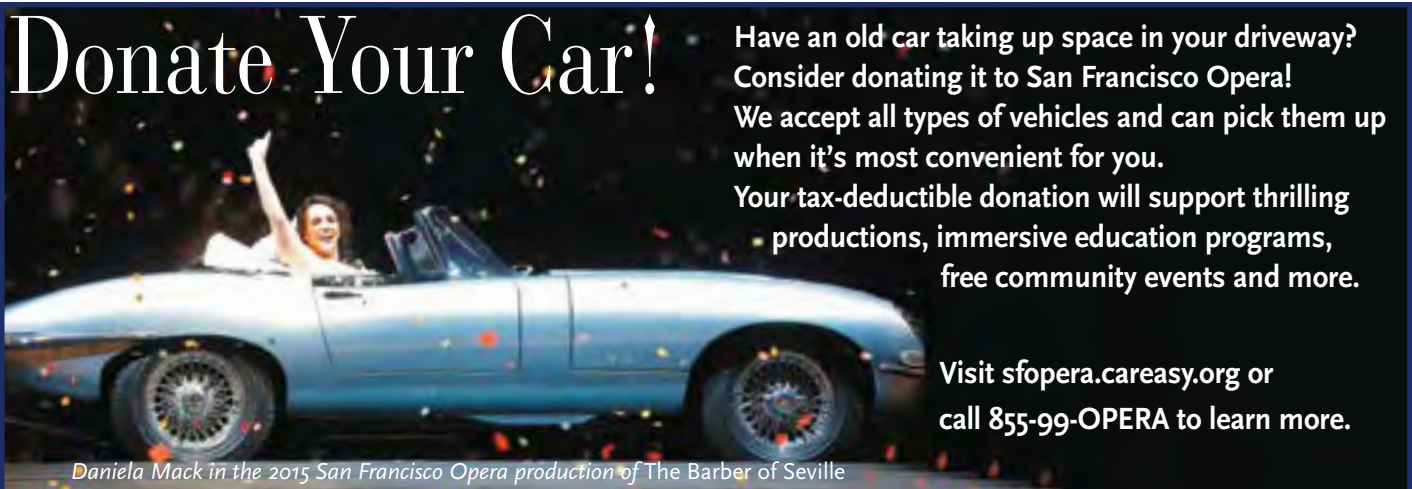
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The Opera gratefully acknowledges the generous legacy gift of Frederick Joseph Hirth, Bel Canto Legacy Society member and Opera supporter. Fred was a descendant of German immigrants whose grandfather founded what is known today as Schoenstein and Co., a pipe organ company that served many of the original churches in San Francisco and orchestrians for saloons on the infamous Barbary Coast. His mother was a San Francisco native with deep ties to the region.

Fred was a devoted patron of San Francisco Opera and particularly loved Richard Wagner works. During his lifetime he visited all of the major opera houses of Europe and in his later years even insisted on being wheel-chaired into La Scala for a performance. Over the years, Fred cherished his friendships and acquaintances with many great performers.

Fred's career spanned several sectors; from his military service during World War II and role in the U.S. State Department's diplomatic corps, to his later career in fashion, and finally as a San Francisco real estate agent. Fred's lifelong love for the Opera and Symphony endured throughout many of his 93-years of life. San Francisco Opera celebrates his extraordinary gesture of support and legacy gift to the Company.

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I have been associated with the Company since 1960, and I feel privileged to have been part of its history, and a part of its future, as well. Thank you for joining me as Bel Canto Legacy Society members.

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Mary & Bill Poland
Ursula Ralph
Joyce Reitman
Venetta & John Rohal

Diane Rubin
San Francisco Opera Guild,
East Bay Chapter
San Francisco Opera Guild,
Marin Chapter
San Francisco Opera Guild,
Peninsula Chapter
Ann Simpson
Claire Collins Skall
Susan Tamagni

*Deceased

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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.

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

San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Ballet, and the San Francisco Symphony are experimenting with allowing audiences to enjoy beverages in the auditorium.

You may bring drinks purchased in the Opera House into the auditorium, as long as they are in the approved compostable cup with a lid, which is available at all bars.

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.
- 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.

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

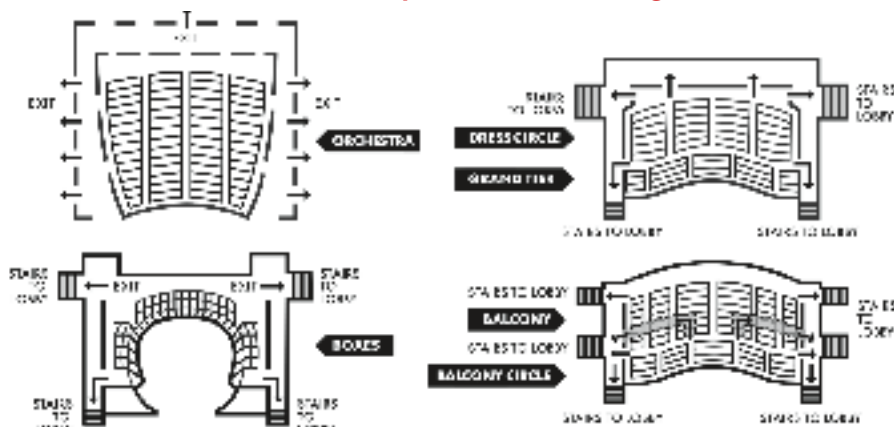
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San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center War Memorial Opera House Exit Diagram



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.



INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND OPERA

In *The Voice of Truth*, Mahatma Gandhi tells us that “a nation’s culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.” Culture and the arts are inextricably intertwined with society. The arts give voice to, and grow out of, society’s aspirations, beliefs, tensions. Sometimes there is an urgent, vital connection between art and society. I think of Messiaen’s *Quartet for the End of Time*, written and premiered in a German prisoner-of-war camp in 1941. But sometimes the intersection of culture and society is more aesthetically motivated, drawing with curiosity on the vast array of colors, harmonies, themes, and ideas that mark the beautiful diversity of global culture.

There is a universality about the most profound musical works. They transcend boundaries of time and place to reach our innermost core as humans. But even music is made up of specific ideas, representations, and themes. What happens when those specifics run counter to societal values, leaving people feeling alienated, hurt, or excluded?

This potential for cultural misalignment is particularly acute in art works that can reflect societal exclusion or inequality, whether in the depiction of race, gender, class, or orientation. In our world of opera, works like *Madame Butterfly* and *Turandot* represent an early 20th-century fascination with Asia that can appear hackneyed, anachronistic, and even offensive given today’s much more nuanced understanding. We must recognize the cultural disconnect that art can engender when viewed through our modern lens, while still recognizing the creative integrity, vision, and impact of the artist’s original work.

Works like *Turandot* and *Butterfly* raise further issues: i) issues of production choices and sensitivity for racial depiction; there is now a near-universal repudiation of using makeup to change a person’s racial appearance onstage; ii) the equity of casting opportunities and how to cast roles like Cio-Cio-San to better reflect the cultural authenticity of the piece; and iii) whether there are works that last for all time, or whether there are works which will eventually become fundamentally at odds with contemporary values.

San Francisco Opera is engaging in serious dialogue around two vitally important questions:


1. How do we better understand the broader community’s perception of opera to attain a deeper appreciation for the multiple perspectives around a work of art?
2. How do we utilize the art form of opera to build resonance with our fast-changing city, developing trust that opera can engage with the most essential of human emotions and situations?


We don’t have all the answers to these questions yet, but we are committed to learning. We are exploring how we can better connect opera to community in a number of critical areas:

- Fundamentally, these are questions that can only begin to be answered by a dialogue with the Bay Area community. We are building partnerships to better understand the broader perception of the Opera and ensure that as many people as possible feel comfortable with, and welcome to, our work.
- We are looking to create art to build interconnections between art and society. Through works like *Girls of the Golden West*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, we want to tell stories that reflect our local culture on the opera stage.
- San Francisco Opera has a strong tradition of inclusivity in its training programs, including historic connections to the Pacific Rim. I want to expand that legacy to create opportunities for audiences, singers, instrumentalists, technicians, and administrators from underrepresented and marginalized communities.

I am sensitive to the challenge that certain art works can create in our society, but I am also excited that opera is an art form that can explore challenging subjects. We must find ways to produce, share, and engage with opera, such that it reflects the amazing breadth of our community, and allows us all to connect on the most fundamental of levels. Returning to the words of Gandhi: “No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive.”

Connect with Matthew via Twitter, Instagram, and email.

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