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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA



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



On the cover:

Kiss Between Two Lovers Vintage postcard by Bleuet Paris, France, early 20th century De Agostini Picture Library / Bridgeman Images

FEATURES

Striking Gold 20

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.

- "Manon, It Has to Be Manon!" 40 by Hugh Macdonald Jules Massenet's 1884 romantic tragedy has all the marks of immortality.
- On the Trail of Manon 44 Take a walking tour of Paris by way of the real-life sites in Massenet's opera.

DEPARTMENTS

- 6 San Francisco Opera Association
- Message from the Board of 9 San Francisco Opera
- 11 San Francisco Opera News
- 2017–18 Repertoire 36
- Synopsis and Cast 38
- SAN FRANCISCO OPERA Δ

- **Artist Profiles** 49
- 66 San Francisco Opera Donors
- 89 Your Opera Experience
- Postlude by General Director 90 Matthew Shilvock

Paul Heppner Publisher

Susan Peterson Design & Production Director

Ana Alvira, Robin Kessler, Shaun Swick, Stevie VanBronkhorst Production Artists and Graphic Design

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Corporate Office

425 North 85th Street Seattle, WA 98103 p 206.443.0445 f 206.443.1246 adsales@encoremediagroup.com 800.308.2898 x105 www.encoremediagroup.com

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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 beauti-



fully 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.

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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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 Cambidge (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



James Gaffigan

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**.

Did You Know?

Nov/Dec 2017

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 polyesterchiffon 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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

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

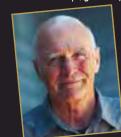
Ready to take a deeper dive into the Ring? Join Wagner scholars, Company artists, and production staff for in-depth presentations and discussions. Thursdays, June 14, 21, & 28 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.



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.





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 multigenerational 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 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.

First Act early childhood



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."



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

Pallelu

JOHN ADAMS

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.







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.

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E-OPERA NEWSLETTER

San Francisco E-Opera subscribers are the first to know about the latest performances, special events, and educational opportunities. Keep up-to-date on featured artists, special ticket offers, advance program notes, and other insider information by signing up at **sfopera.com/eopera.**

INSIGHT PANELS

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

OPERA PREVIEW LECTURES

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

OVERTURE: OPERA WORKSHOPS FOR ADULTS

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

FAMILY PROGRAMS

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

CHECK OUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S BLOG

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

OPERA HOUSE TOURS

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

OPERA TALKS

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

Manon: Marcia Green

Turandot: Robert Hartwell

Girls of the Golden West: Clifford Cranna

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IN MEMORIAM



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 *Jenufa* 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."





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 KKHI



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 parttime 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."



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 tech-

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 environmentallysustainable 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."

nique, 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).





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 incredi-

ble 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."

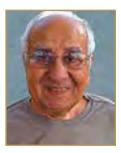


KURT MOLL, Bass

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."

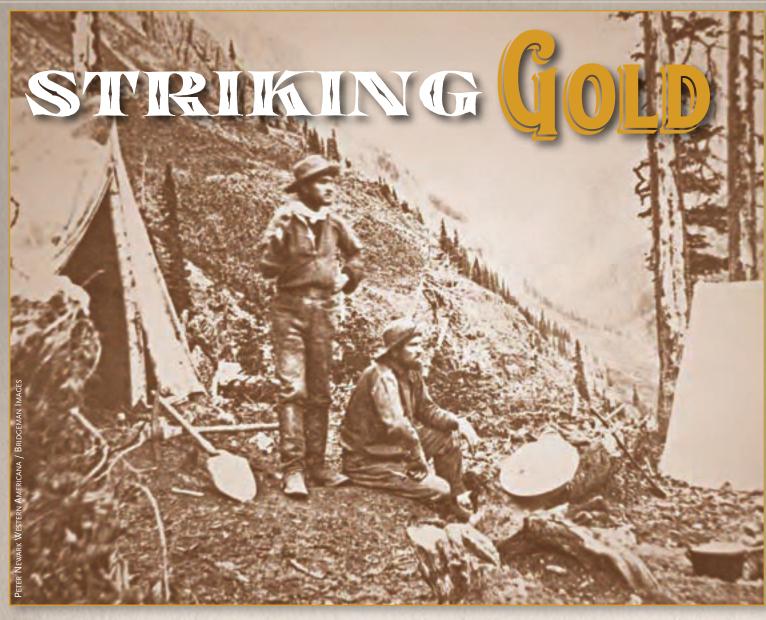
EUGENE NAHAM, Chorus

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.

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



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

n 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 goldobsessed 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 Englanderthoroughly 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.

Sellars 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-talkedabout 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.

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 Sellars. "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 Sellars 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.

Sellars, 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, Sellars wondered if a "real" Gold Rush



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.





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



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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.



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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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.



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 SAN FRANCISCO 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.



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 ANDREW W.



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 Shilvock. "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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DONOR SPOTLIGHT

s 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 Soloman 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

Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem





Top: Maria Manetti Shrem and Jan Shrem

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

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."



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2017–18 REPERTORY

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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.

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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.

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Richard Wagner

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

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Jules Massenet

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 and Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem.

Ms. Dehn and Mr. Pershall's appearances are made possible by the Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem Emerging Stars Fund.

Mr. Fabiano's appearance is made possible by a gift to the Great Singers Fund by Joan & David Traitel.

Additional funding is provided by Mr. & Mrs. Burton McMurtry.

The November 10 performance is sponsored by Kaiser Permanente.

SYNOPSIS

MANON

ACT I

In the courtyard of an inn at Amiens, an elderly roué, Guillot de Morfontaine, has ordered dinner for three actresses, Poussette, Javotte, and Rosette, and his friend Brétigny. While they are dining, a swaggering officer, Lescaut, comes to wait for his young cousin, Manon, who is expected to arrive by coach on her way to the convent. Manon is greeted by her cousin and describes the excitement of her journey. While Lescaut goes off to look for her luggage, Guillot makes advances toward Manon and offers his carriage for an assignation. Left alone, Manon, wistfully reflects on the merriment of his companions. When the handsome Chevalier des Grieux arrives and is taken by her charms, she is easily persuaded to run off with him, in Guillot's coach, to Paris.

ACT II

Manon and Des Grieux are living happily in their Paris apartment, although she already conceals the fact that an unknown suitor has been sending her flowers. Having agreed to separate the couple, Lescaut and Brétigny, who is disguised as a soldier, force their way into the apartment. The former demands that Des Grieux marry Manon; the latter warns her that the Chevalier is about to be abducted by his father, the Comte des Grieux. Brétigny then advises her to turn to himself for support and security. When Des Grieux assures Lescaut that he has every intention of marrying Manon, the intruders leave. As Des Grieux goes off to mail a letter asking his father's permission to marry Manon, she sadly bids farewell to the little table where they have so often dined. Des Grieux returns, dreaming of an idyllic life with his beloved. A knock is heard at the door, and when the Chevalier answers it, he is seized by his father's emissaries.

ACT III

SCENE 1: A holiday crowd fills the Cours-la-Reine. Manon, accompanied by her new lover, Brétigny, exults in the joys of youth and pleasure. But when she overhears the Chevalier's father, the elderly Comte de Grieux, talking with Brétigny, she is distressed to learn that the young Chevalier is about to take holy orders. Having learned the whereabouts of her former lover, she orders her cousin to call her a coach. She departs for the church of Saint-Sulpice, where young Des Grieux is preaching.

SCENE 2: In the dimly lit church, members of the congregation praise the eloquence of the new orator. Skeptical of his son's newfound

virtue, the Comte tries to persuade the young man to renounce his vocation and find a suitable girl to marry. Spurning his father's advice, Des Grieux prays for the strength to forget Manon. When she arrives at the seminary, she pleads with him to return to her. After he tries in vain to resist her, the lovers are reunited.

ACT IV

The Hôtel de Transylvanie, a clandestine Parisian gambling hotel, is crowded with pleasure-seekers, among them Guillot, his three companions, and Brétigny. Manon and Des Grieux arrive, and Manon urges the Chevalier to improve their fortunes by gambling. Des Grieux reluctantly agrees and plays cards with Guillot. Losing every hand, Guillot accuses Des Grieux of cheating and goes off to call the police. They arrive with the Comte, and arrest the young lovers, threatening Manon with deportation.

ACT V

On the road to Le Havre, where Manon is to be deported, the Chevalier attempts, with Lescaut's help, to intercept the convoy of delinquent women and rescue his beloved from exile. They succeed by means of a bribe. Manon falls exhausted into Des Grieux's arms. Realizing that she is near death, she asks Des Grieux for his pardon. Dreaming of their past happiness, Manon dies.

First performance: Paris, Opéra-Comique; January 19, 1884

First performance in the U.S.: New York, Academy of Music; December 23, 1885

First San Francisco Opera performance: September 29, 1924

Manon has been performed in 19 previous seasons at San Francisco Opera. For complete casting and other information, visit **archive.sfopera.com**.

Personnel: 9 principals, 56 choristers, 2 dancers, 9 supernumeraries; **76 total**.

Orchestra: 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 cornets, 3 trombones, 1 timpanist, 3 percussion, 1 harp; 40 strings (12 first violins, 9 second violins, 7 violas, 7 cellos, 5 basses); **62 total**.

Backstage: 5 violins, 1 cello, 1 bass, 1 clarinet, 1 bassoon, organ, chimes; **11 total**.

Conductor Patrick Fournillier

Director Vincent Boussard

Associate Director Gediminas Šeduikis*

Set Designer Vincent Lemaire

Costume Designer Vincent Boussard

Lighting Designer Gary Marder

Chorus Director

Dance Master Lawrence Pech

Fight Director Dave Maier

Assistant Directors Jose Maria Condemi E. Reed Fisher

Assistant Conductor Christopher Ocasek

Musical Preparation Bryndon Hassman Matthew Piatt Jocelyne Dienst-Bladin John Churchwell Fabrizio Corona

Prompter Dennis Doubin

Supertitles Christopher Bergen

Stage Manager Gina Hays

Assistant Stage Managers Jenny Harber Jimmy Marcheso Andrew Landis

Costume Supervisor Kristi Johnson

Head of Wig and Makeup Jeanna Parham

A co-production of San Francisco Opera, Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, and the Israeli Opera

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2017 AT 7:30 PM TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7 AT 7:30 PM FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10 AT 7:30 PM THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16 AT 7:30 PM SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19 AT 2 PM WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22 AT 7:30 PM Opera in five acts by **Jules Massenet** Libretto by **Henri Meilhac** and **Philippe Gille** Based on the novel *L'histoire du chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* by **Abbé Prévost**

MANON

(Sung in French with English supertitles)

CAST

Guillot de Morfontaine De Brétigny Poussette lavotte Rosette An innkeeper Lescaut First guard Second guard An old lady A female traveler Another female traveler Yet another female traveler A male traveler Another male traveler Yet another male traveler Manon Lescaut Chevalier des Grieux A maid-servant Comte des Grieux Gamblers Dealer Ballerina Prostitute A Voice Sergeants

(in order of appearance) **Robert Brubaker Timothy Mix** Monica Dewey* Laura Krumm **Renée Rapier** Anders Fröhlich David Pershall **Torlef Borsting** Jere Torkelsen Virginia Pluth Sally Mouzon **Elizabeth Baker Carole Schaffer Bradley Kynard Chester Pidduck** Alex Taite Ellie Dehn **Michael Fabiano** Erin Neff James Creswell Alan Cochran, Keith Perry **Anders Fröhlich Rachel Speidel Little Brook Broughton Christopher Filipowicz*** Bojan Knežević, Torlef Borsting, Anders Fröhlich, Michael Jankosky

Citizens, cooks, travelers, nobles, soldiers, guards, gamblers, prostitutes

* San Francisco Opera debut

ACT I: The courtyard of an inn at Amiens **ACT II:** The apartment of Des Grieux and Manon, Paris

-INTERMISSION

ACT III, SCENE 1: Cours-la-Reine, Paris ACT III, SCENE 2: The seminary of Saint-Sulpice

—INTERMISSION—

ACT IV: A gambling salon, the Hôtel de Transylvanie ACT V: The road to Le Havre

The performance will last approximately three hours and 25 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.

BY HUGH MACDONALD

"Manon, it has to be Manon!"

Jules Massenet's romantic tragedy has all the marks of immortality

n January 19, 1884, when Jules Massenet's *Manon* was heard for the first time on the stage of Paris' Opéra-Comique, there were no other French composers in contention for leadership of the lyric stage. Charles Gounod had not had a success since *Roméo et Juliette* in 1867; Ambroise Thomas' glory, with *Mignon* and *Hamlet*, was nearly 20 years behind him; Georges Bizet was dead; Camille Saint-Saëns had had a recent success with *Henry VIII* but was still hoping to see *Samson et Dalila* staged in France; Édouard Lalo had two operas, *Fiesque* and *Le Roi d'Ys*, awaiting performance; Claude Debussy was still a student at the Conservatoire.

Massenet, on the other hand, was already launched, at the age of 41, on a brilliant career. He was obviously both versatile and thoroughly professional. He had proved himself in swift-moving comedy (*Don César de Bazan* at the Opéra-Comique in 1872) and in traditionally massive grand opera (*Le Roi de Lahore* at the Palais Garnier in 1877 and *Hérodiade* in Brussels in 1881). He was already admired for his instinctive feeling for the voice, his skill as an orchestrator (he had earned his living as a timpanist in his early years), and his ability to evoke exotic times and places. What Massenet had not yet shown to the world was the intensity of feeling that floods the stage in *Manon*. In many ways, this was the perfect subject for him. It allowed him to evoke an 18th-century world with delicately recreated *galanteries*; it contained comic and absurd figures, to be characterized with a few deft strokes of the pen; it was based on the sentimental novel by Abbé Prévost that everybody had read; and it portrayed its principal characters, Manon and Des Grieux, with a vitality that transcended traditional operatic stiffness and brought an unusually real emotional tension straight to the hearts of the audience.

"Manon!" I cried, pointing to the book. "Manon Lescaut do you mean?" "No! Manon, just Manon; Manon, it has to be Manon."

This exchange, related by Massenet in his book of reminiscences, recalls a conversation with the librettist Henri Meilhac, who, after working for many years with Ludovic Halévy on such works as *Carmen* and some of Jacques Offenbach's operettas, was now collaborating with Philippe Gille. After *Hérodiade*, Massenet was looking for his next work. The subject of *Manon* was agreed upon. A contract was signed with the Opéra-Comique in February 1882 and the task of composition occupied him that summer, his winter months being taken up with his duties as composition professor at the Conservatoire. The vocal score was finished in October. At one point he sought inspiration in the very house in The Hague, Holland where Prévost had lived. This came about because he had a concert to conduct in Brussels on August 8, and the bandmaster at The Hague seized the opportunity to invite him to stay. But he found it hard to write there and merely absorbed what impressions he could.

With a sense of certainty that many composers would envy, Massenet sent the vocal score to be printed before embarking on the orchestration, which filled the summer months of the following year,

1883. As he scored his opera, he filled his manuscript with dates and notes, like a journal. The opera was ready for production that fall, and the premiere, with Marie Heilbronn as Manon and Talazac as Des Grieux, took place in January 1884, with 77 more performances that year, an unprecedented success. When *Manon* was performed at The Hague in 1881, the title role was taken over by Sacramento-born Sybil Sanderson, who so bewitched Massenet that he later wrote two leading roles for her in *Esclarmonde* and *Thaïs. Manon* remained continuously in the repertoire of the Opéra-Comique until 1959.

Manon is, of course, a tragic, not a comic, opera, and its appearance was a milestone in the steady elevation of the "comique" repertoire in the second half of the century,

a process precipitated in 1856, as it happens, by Daniel Auber's now forgotten opera Manon Lescaut, in which the death of Manon "in the forests of Louisiana" disturbed the habitués of the Opéra-Comigue just as the more violent death of Carmen on the same stage was to later outrage them. Manon is not a shocker, but it drew on the more stressful emotions that Verdi had made his own, as well as the touching sentiment familiar from Gounod and Thomas. The spoken dialogue that had been a standard requirement of opéra-comique here takes the form of mélodrame, speech over music which either deals with perfunctory business in a perfunctory way or throws a *frisson* into the action in such scenes as the arrival of the police in the gambling scene in Act IV. Every character has lines to speak at some point, and speech is used for comic relief as well as emotional tension. There is never any feeling of experiment on these occasions, for Massenet's judgment in such matters was impeccable.

The libretto suited him well since it allowed him to incorporate the variety of scenes and settings that his audience adored. The church scene at Saint-Sulpice with its pious tone contrasts vividly with the gambling scene that follows, and the intimacy of Manon's apartment in the Rue Vivienne in Act II gives way to the bustle of the Cours-la-Reine scene at the opening of Act III. Evoking 18thcentury France with recurrent baroque stylizations appealed greatly to Massenet's taste for pastiche, for it heightened the effect of the passionate modern style all the more forcefully. When Des Grieux bursts out with his desperate plea for Manon's love in the antechapel of Saint-Sulpice, the orchestra's urgency displaces the organ's solemn intonings with shocking suddenness. Massenet learned this kind of theatrical sleight-of-hand from Bizet, and more especially from Giuseppe Verdi, with whom Massenet shared a thoroughly professional and businesslike approach to the craft of writing operas. The Comte des Grieux bears a striking resemblance to Verdi's Giorgio Ger-



mont in *La Traviata* with the intervention of both fathers in gambling scenes acting, as they think, in their sons' best interests.

Like Verdi, Massenet had an acute sense of the single scene as a musical unit in which themes and motives can be deployed to represent mood or character and to provide musical unity. The craftsmanship that controls these 5–15-minute units is exemplary, coupled with a prudent use of motives to delineate characters and ideas. Like all advanced composers in the later 19th century, Massenet was accused of borrowing from Richard Wagner, whose impact on the French was coming to a frenzy just when *Manon*, that most un-Wagnerian of operas, was first performed. But Massenet scarcely needed to refute the charge, since the attachment of motives to ideas and characters was a well-established operatic principle long before Wagner hijacked it. It was a natural outcome of the universal belief that music in opera must reflect the mood and meaning of the libretto, as Massenet's music always does.

Massenet's use of motives is in any case not systematic, but he gives most of his characters distinctive motives that mark their entrances and actions. Lescaut has two motives; Brétigny and Guillot have one each. Manon has two, which both pass out of sight quite quickly, since she grows up with frightening rapidity. Her earlier motives, suggesting innocence, serve no purpose once that innocence is past. Massenet undoubtedly relished and exploited the great flexibility offered by the freedom to draw on earlier motives and to use them as building material in later scenes, but he also understood the necessity and effect of new ideas introduced quite late in the drama when circumstances and characters have changed. Des Grieux's complex characteriza-

> Opposite and top: Vincent Boussard's production of Manon premiered at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre in Vilnius in September 2015.

> > Left: A circa 18th-century illustration from the Abbé Prévost book that was later adapted into Massenet's opera.

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA tion explodes the belief, often repeated, that Massenet could portray only female characters with true feeling, and once Manon has been lured into the social world, it is difficult to believe in her attachment to him as wholly as in his for her. Yet because Manon is the only female character (apart from the puppet-like trio of Poussette, Javotte, and Rosette) against five males with various claims on her, she cannot fail to hold our attention when she is on stage. Her plight is no less touching because she appears at times both fickle and shallow. Massenet's sense of her impudence and gaiety makes this image of the eternal feminine perfectly sympathetic.

After Manon, Massenet continued to supply the French stage with a varied series of works for almost 30 years, rarely repeating himself. Werther, perhaps his masterpiece, appeared in 1892, presenting an even greater sense of tragic destiny against an 18th-century background. Even in his humorous operas, such as Cendrillon and Don Quichotte, he can draw a sentimental tear. In Le Portrait de Manon, a one-act opéra-comique composed a year after Werther, an older Des Grieux is given over to a life of sorrow; his nephew is in love with Manon's niece, a circumstance that touchingly recalls his lost passion. Massenet could equally set the stage ablaze with raw passion and political violence worthy of any exponent of Italian verismo. La Navarraise is set in the murderous Spanish Carlist War of 1874, and Thérèse recounts a grim episode from the French Revolution. Coptic Egypt, the Byzantine court, medieval Cluny, Hindu India, biblical Galilee, contemporary Provence, ancient Rome-all these offered Massenet opportunities to display his abundant powers of evocation and his gift for exotic color. Whatever the setting, his precise methods of work, his meticulous concern for the human voice, and his masterly control of theatrical timing and movement never failed him. Many of his works have vanished, perhaps irretrievably, from the repertoire, but his half-dozen finest operas, from which surely no one would ever exclude Manon, show all the signs of immortality.

Hugh Macdonald is general editor of the Hector Berlioz: New Edition of the Complete Works and author of several entries within The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.

A Chat with Director Vincent Boussord

Similar to your staging of Bellini's I Capuleti e i Montecchi here in 2012, this production of Manon isn't situated in a specific period in time—certainly not the 1721 setting that composer Jules Massenet had in mind. Why is that?

As a director, I try to create bridges between periods of time to make the story seem more immediate. I am led by the quality of the music and the singing. So we're playing here with the idea that the opera's characters aren't stuck in an actual historical context. We're trying to build bridges between the time of the story (the beginning of the 18th century) and the time of Massenet (1884) and now. I'm trying to give the character of Manon a chance to be imagined and received by the audience as if she could also be a lady of today.

It's not because of her time that Manon behaves the way that she does; she should appear without any filter. Certainly, we can't forget where she's originally coming from and the time of the composer. That's why I'm trying to mix up these three different dimensions and periods.

Who is Manon?

She's a character that we find in any society and time. She is young, struggling for life, a woman full of desires and passions—and, from the beginning, she's totally frustrated and punished because of that. People have told her, "Don't dream, don't be the one who enjoys pleasure." And then she discovers very quickly what kind of power she can have over men. For sure, it's a double game of manipulation, because men think of women as objects. She's a victim of it. At the beginning, she's the prey and then the prey becomes the predator.

Her problem will be that she can't ever stop. Once she has something, she wants something more. Her passion has no limits. This is what makes the character extremely fascinating. I have no sympathy for the way she is behaving, but I'm fascinated and want to know more about her and her processes.

Does Manon really love Des Grieux?

From Act IV of Boussard's

original staging of Manon.

As far as she can love a man, yes. She is deeply touched by the quality of his love, the way he tells it, and the way he offers himself. At the end of the second act, she says, "I love him. But..." She has no choice: she knows Des Grieux will be captured anyway.

How is Manon different from Violetta in La Traviata?

For sure, these two characters are, in a way, sisters. But Violetta wants to invent a new life towards redemption. Manon is running and running, always for more. Until the

end, she remains naïve. She can find her way out of any mess; she has instinct and the right intuition for tricky situations. But she's not planning anything. Never. She's always surprised by herself and extraordinarily aware of who she is, which makes her character very complex.

> How do you walk the line between tragedy and lightness? The music of Manon has such a champagne-like effervescence.

Absolutely. This is what makes the piece fantastic. But what's even more interesting is that the lightness is often covering some kind of tragic aspect—or something dangerous. The lightness comes not only just to have fun. The style is very French and elegant, and there are lots of quotations of French Baroque music, but it's always like a mask.

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On the Trail of

The real-life sites of Massenet's opera present a charming tour of Paris

ules Massenet's *Manon* is by no means the only famous opera set in Paris. Puccini's *La Bohème*, of course, brings the Latin Quarter to splendid life. And in Verdi's *La Traviata*, Charpentier's *Louise*, Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*, and Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Paris is inseparable from the action of these operas. But, arguably, *Manon* holds an even dearer place for lovers of the city.

In a similar way that Puccini's *Tosca* plays out in the historic buildings of Rome (the Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, Farnese Palace, and Castel Sant' Angelo), the romance, ebullience, and tragedy of *Manon* transpire in key sites in the heart of the French capital. For those who want to experience more of Massenet's opera (based on the 1731 novel by Abbé Prévost), a promenade through the real-life locales is a rich and fascinating pleasure.



1. Rue Vivienne

What happens here in *Manon*: Manon and the Chevalier des Grieux are living happily



together in a simple apartment. Their hideaway is discovered by Manon's cousin Lescaut and the well-heeled Brétigny who warn that Des Grieux is about to be abducted by his father, the Comte des Grieux. Brétigny tempts Manon with a life of luxury if she lives with him instead. Alone, Manon sings farewell to her humble life with Des Grieux ("Adieu, notre petite table") before he is taken away.

What you see now: Located in the second arrondissement, this short street is considerably more posh than the second act of *Manon* would suggest. The north side of the street borders on the Bourse (top left), the historical Paris stock exchange also known as the Palais Brongniart, with the gardens of the Royal Palace adjoining to the south. Charming shops, including the covered passageway of the Galerie Vivienne (top right), proliferate in between. Designed by architect François Jean Delannoy and treasured for its mosaics and glazed rotunda, the Galerie Vivienne has been registered as a historical monument since 1974.

Tip: Enjoy a café au lait or lunch at the Bistrot Vivienne (4 rue des Petits Champs).

What's nearby: The Opéra-Comique, which premiered Manon on January 19, 1884.

2. Cours-la-Reine

What happens here in *Manon*: A holiday crowd files along the garden walkway by the Seine River. Manon walks arm in arm with Brétigny, enjoying her new status. She overhears the Comte des Grieux tell Brétigny that his son is planning to take holy orders and preach that evening at the church of Saint-Sulpice.

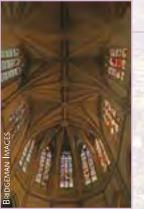


What you see now: Pedestrians and bikers happily share this narrow promenade between the Place de la Concorde and the Place du Canada. Lined with chestnut trees with beautiful views of the Seine, the Cours-la-Reine (French for "the Queen's promenade") was created by Queen Marie de Medici in the early 17th century. Other public parks are adjacent, including the Tuileries and the Jardin des Champs-Élysées.

COURS LA REINE

Tip: Take a scenic walk directly across the Seine to the Left Bank and visit Les Invalides, the famous burial place of Napoleon Bonaparte.

What's nearby: Impressionist art at the Musée d'Orsay and shopping on the Champs-Élysées.







3. Church of Saint-Sulpice

What happens here in Manon: Des Grieux receives praise for his preaching, but he can't help but think of Manon. He finds her waiting for him in the church. Manon reaffirms her love, and they flee together.

What you see now: This largest church in Paris is renowned for its neoclassical architecture, Gran organ, knockout Delacroix paintings, Louis XV-period paneling and stained glass. Of scientific interest is the Gnomon, a 36-foot-high obelisk and meridian line of brass that was constructed in 1743

to verify the calculation of the date of the spring equinox and Easter and improve the precision of astronomical data.

Tip: The church conducts free guided tours every Sunday at 2:30 p.m. with organ recitals taking place most Sunday afternoons or evenings.

What's nearby: The Jardin du Luxembourg, which was also created by Marie de Medici.



4. La Salpêtrière

What happens here in Manon: In the final act of Massenet's opera, Manon is held in custody and transported to Le Havre, Normandy where she is to be finally deported to Louisiana. But in the original story by Abbé Prevost, she is confined in La Salpêtrière, where prostitutes were often jailed during the 18th century.

What you see now: One of the largest hospitals in Europe, the Hôpital universitaire Pitié-Salpêtrière is a teaching hospital of Sorbonne University. Sigmund Freud taught there, and over the decades it has treated many VIPs. Among the celebrities who died at the Hôpital were singer Josephine Baker in 1975 and Princess Diana of Wales in 1997.

Tip: Go see the Chapelle de la Salpêtrière (Hospital Chapel), one of the masterworks of Les Invalides architect Libéral Bruant (1635-1697). Built on the model of a Greek cross, it has a beautiful octagonal cupola, illuminated by picture windows in circular arcs.

What's nearby: The Opêra Bastille, which is just across the Seine via the Pont Austerlitz.



Past Casts at San Francisco Opera

Lucrezia Bori sang the title role in 1934.

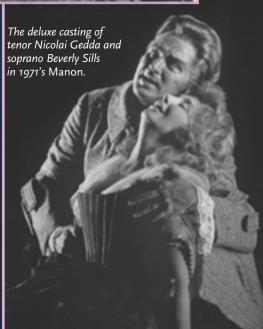
LAWRENCE MORTON



Bidú Sayão as <u>Man</u>on in 1939.



Leyla Gencer (Manon Lescaut), Richard Lewis (Chevalier des Grieux), and Louis Quilico (Comte des Grieux) from 1958.



A candid shot from 1934 of Myrtle McLaughlin (Poussette), Marek Windheim (Guillot), Georgette Schiller (Rosette), Jack Howell (Brétigny), and Helene Strause (Javotte). Vina Bovy (Manon) and René Maison (Des Grieux)



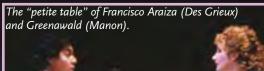
The Three Actresses from 1954: Elinor Warren (Javotte), Rosalind Nadell (Rosette), and Yola Casselle (Poussette).

6 SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

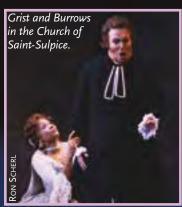


1981's Cours-la-Reine scene with Reri Grist as Manon, Stuart Burrows as Des Grieux, and Dale Duesing as Manon's cousin, L<u>escau</u>t.











Ruth Ann Swenson as Manon and Jerry Hadley as Des Grieux (1998).







From 1998, the last time that the Company presented Manon; sets and costumes by David Mitchell.

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ARTIST PROFILES



PATRICK FOURNILLIER (Paris, France) Conductor Conductor Patrick Fournillier made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2011 with Cyrano de Bergerac

and returned to lead the Company's 2013 production of Les Contes d'Hoffmann. In recent seasons, he has been on the podium at Milan's Teatro alla Scala for Cyrano de Bergerac with Plácido Domingo, Zurich Opera for Faust, Berlin State Opera for Don Carlo, the Ravenna Festival for La Traviata, Lyric Opera of Chicago for Lucia di Lammermoor and Werther, Seattle Opera for La Voix humaine and Suor Angelica, the Metropolitan Opera for Les Contes d'Hoffmann, and the Dresden Staastskapelle for Don Giovanni and La Damnation de Faust. Regarded as one of the top specialists of French and Italian music, he was nominated for six years at the head of Toscanini Symphony Orchestra in Parma, Italy, conducting mostly Verdi works. Other engagements this season include Warsaw National Opera for Pelléas et Mélisande; Helsinki Opera for Il Trovatore, Tosca, and Les Contes d'Hoffmann; and Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts and Madrid's Teatro Real for Thais with Plácido Domingo.



ELLIE DEHN (Anoka Minn

(Anoka, Minnesota) **Manon Lescaut** Since making her Company debut in 2012 as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, soprano Ellie Dehn has appeared at San

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

Countess in Elena Langer's *Figaro Gets a Divorce* with Grand Théâtre de Genève. Later this season, she appears as Donna Elvira at the Dallas Opera.



(Montclair, New Jersey) **Chevalier des Grieux** Tenor Michael Fabiano made his San Francisco Opera debut as Gennaro in *Lucrezia Borgia* in 2011

MICHAEL FABIANO

and has since returned as the tenor soloist in the Verdi Requiem in 2013, Rodolfo in La Bohème in 2014 and Luisa Miller in 2015, and in the title role of Don Carlo in 2016. The recipient of the 2014 Beverly Sills Artist Award and the 2014 Richard Tucker Award, he opened the 2017–18 season at Royal Opera, Covent Garden in a new production of *La Bohème*, conducted by Antonio Pappano. Later this season, he will return to Covent Garden to sing the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*, a role in which he will also make his Los Angeles Opera debut. In addition, he will appear in a recital for Oper Frankfurt and at the Metropolitan Opera to sing Rodolfo in La Bohème and Edgardo in Lucia di Lammermoor, the latter of which he will reprise for Opera Australia. Last season, Fabiano made his debuts with the Royal Danish Opera in the Verdi Requiem and Houston Grand Opera in the title role of Faust; sang Jean in Massenet's Hérodiade with Washington Concert Opera; returned to the Metropolitan Opera for performances as Rodolfo in La Bohème and Alfredo in La Traviata; and sang his first Don José in Carmen at Festival Aix-en-Provence.



DAVID PERSHALL (Temple, Texas) Lescaut Baritone David Pershall made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2016 as Roucher in Andrea Chénier. A 2008 graduate of

the Merola Opera program, he debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in 2015 in the title role of *II Barbiere di Siviglia*, which he quickly followed with performances the following year as Schaunard in *La Bohème* and Lord Cecil in *Maria Stuarda*. He has also been seen in many leading roles at the Vienna State Opera, including the title role of *II Barbiere di Siviglia*, Belcore



RHODA Goldman

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in L'Elisir d'Amore, Sharpless in Madama Butterfly, Sebastian in Thomas Ades' The Tempest, and Lescaut in Manon Lescaut. Earlier this year, he made his role debut as Marcello in La Bohème with the Salzburger Landestheater.



JAMES CRESWELL (Seattle, Washington) Comte des Grieux Bass James Creswell made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2013 as Crespel in Les Contes d'Hoffmann and appeared that

same season as a Pharisee of Capernaum and Newscaster in the world premiere of Mark Adamo's The Gospel of Mary *Magdalene*. He has performed at the Dutch National Opera, Madrid's Teatro Real, Bilbao Opera, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Los Angeles Opera, Berlin State Opera, Oper Frankfurt, Theater an der Wien, Opéra de Bordeaux, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, and Berlin's Komische Oper in roles ranging from Handel to Britten. A 2000 graduate of the Merola Opera Program, Creswell has also appeared frequently on the concert stage, including in Schoenberg's Gurrelieder for the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Mark Elder and Bach's St. Matthew Passion at the Cincinnati May Festival under James Conlon.



TIMOTHY MIX (Fairfax, Virginia) De Brétigny

Finnish-American baritone Timothy Mix made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2010 as Sonora in *La Fanciulla del West*

and has since returned as Le Bret in Cyrano de Bergerac in 2010, Le Dancaïre in Carmen in 2011, and as Elder Ott in Carlisle Floyd's Susannah in 2014. Other career highlights include Ping in *Turandot* under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel at the Los Angeles Philharmonic as well as at Portland Opera; Ford in Falstaff and Edward Gaines in the New York premiere of Richard Danielpour and Toni Morrison's Margaret Garner, both at New York City Opera; Michele in Il Tabarro and Tonio in Pagliacci at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; and Renato in Un Ballo in Maschera and Ford in Falstaff. both at Washington National Opera. In the 2017–18 season, Mix will also perform as

Jack Hubbard in the Santa Fe Opera's new production of John Adams' *Doctor Atomic*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Virginia Opera, and Verdi's Requiem with the Florida Orchestra.



ROBERT BRUBAKER

(Manheim, Pennsylvania) **Guillot de Morfontaine** Earlier this season, tenor Robert Brubaker made his San Francisco Opera debut as Emperor Altoum in

Turandot and appeared as Aegisth in Elektra. He has been a frequent performer at the Metropolitan Opera, including as Mime in Siegfried and Das Rheingold, Monostatos in Die Zauberflöte, Malatestino in Francesca da Rimini, the Witch in Hänsel und Gretel, and Mao Tse-tung in John Adams' Nixon in China. He has also recently performed as Herod in Salome with the Dallas Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and Pittsburgh Opera; the Jailer/Inquisitor in Il Prigionero at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona; Old Man Marshall in Mark-Anthony Turnage's Anna Nicole at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; Alviano in Die Gezeichneten, Dr. Caius in Falstaff, and Bégearss in John Corigliano's The Ghosts of Versailles at Los Angeles Opera; Luigi in Il Tabarro and Canio in Pagliacci at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; and Wilmer McLean/J. Edgar Hoover in Philip Glass' Appomattox at Washington National Opera. Later this season, he returns as Emperor Altoum at San Francisco Opera and appears as Herod at Teatro Regio Torino.



MONICA DEWEY (Atlanta, Georgia) Poussette Making her San Francisco Opera debut as Poussette, soprano Monica Dewey has participated in the young artist programs

at Michigan Opera Theatre, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Chautauqua Voice Institute, and Lyric Opera Studio Weimar. Notable roles include Marie in *La Fille du Régiment*, Servilia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Morgana in *Alcina*, Dalinda in *Ariodante*, and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*. She received her Master of Music degree from Indiana University and, most recently, won first prize in the 10th International Hilde Zadek Voice

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Manon 36 x 18, oil on canvas



Competition in Vienna, Austria. In 2016, Dewey was the second place winner in the Central Region of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and she is a two-time winner of the Indiana District auditions. Her upcoming engagements include Alice B. Toklas in Ricky Ian Gordon's 27 with the Michigan Opera Theatre and Alexandra Giddens in *Regina* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.



LAURA KRUMM (Iowa City, Iowa) Javotte Mezzo-soprano Laura Krumm made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2012 as Countess Ceprano and Page in *Rigoletto*

and has appeared in several other roles on the Company's main stage, including the Second Maidservant in this season's Elektra, Kate Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly, the Maid in *Jenufa*, Rosina in the family performances of The Barber of Seville, and a Maid in the world premiere of Tobias Picker's Dolores Claiborne. For San Francisco Opera, she also created the part of Martha Sowerby in the world premiere of Nolan Gasser's The Secret Garden, and she sang Laura in Jack Perla's Love/Hate at the ODC Theater in association with the San Francisco Opera Center. Recent engagements include her company and role debuts as Zerlina in Don Giovanni for Nashville Opera, Mrs. Webb in Ned Rorem's Our Town with Fresno Grand Opera, and Meg in Mark Adamo's Little Women for Michigan Opera Theatre. Krumm is a 2013 graduate of San Francisco Opera's Adler Fellowship Program. Later this season, she appears with the Company as Siegrune in the Ring cycle.



RENÉE RAPIER (Marion, Iowa) Rosette After receiving her training as a San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow (2012–13) and Los Angeles Opera Domingo Thornton

Young Artist, mezzo-soprano Renée Rapier has gone on to make debuts with Los Angeles Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, the Ravinia Festival, and Seattle Opera. Her 2016–17 season included returns to Seattle Opera (Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*), Opera Parallèle, and

a debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Rapier was the 2012 winner of the Palm Springs Opera Guild Competition, and the 2013 Brava! Opera Theater and James M. Collier Young Artist Program Vocal Competition. She also was a 2011 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions semifinalist, a finalist of the 2013 Seoul International Music Competition, and a semifinalist at Operalia 2015. For San Francisco Opera, she appeared as Flora Bervoix in La Traviata earlier this season, Mercédès in 2016's Carmen, and made her Company debut in 2013 as a Maid in Tobias Picker's Dolores Claiborne. Later this season at San Francisco Opera, Rapier makes her *Ring* cycle debut as Grimgerde.



ANDERS FRÖHLICH (Kent, Connecticut) An Innkeeper Baritone Anders Fröhlich is a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus and has appeared as the Major-Domo in

2016's Andrea Chénier, the Spanish Sailor in 2012's Moby-Dick, and as Polinesso's squire in 2008's Ariodante. In addition, he has performed with Opera San Jose, Opera Parallèle, and West Edge Opera. Recent engagements include the role of Second Guard in Opera Parallèle's production of Jake Heggie's Dead Man Walking and as Augusto in Ars Minerva's production of La Cleopatra by Daniele da Castrovillari.



RACHEL SPEIDEL LITTLE (Sandusky, Michigan)

Ballerina A member of the San Francisco Opera Corps de Ballet since 2012, Rachel Speidel Little performed

last season as the Solo Dancer in the Francesca Zambello production of Aida with choreography by Jessica Lang. In 2015, she made her San Francisco Opera solo debut as Polyxene in *Les Troyens*, and she has performed in Company productions of *Nixon in China*, *Mefistofele*, *Attila*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *The Barber of Seville*, and *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Little began her professional career as a member of Milwaukee Ballet and has gone on to appear with the Oakland Ballet, Menlowe Ballet, Sacramento Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal,





2017/18 SEASON

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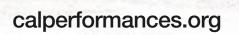
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Amy Seiwert's Imagery, Ballet de Teatres de la Generalitat Valenciana, and the Milissa Payne Project. She has also been a frequent guest artist with the San Francisco Symphony.



BROOK BROUGHTON (Eastford, Connecticut) Prostitute Brook Broughton joined the San Francisco Opera Dance Corps in 2005

after spending six years at San Francisco Ballet where she originated roles with choreographers Helgi Tomasson, Yuri Possokov, Julia Adam, Alexei Ratmansky, and Mark Morris. She received her ballet training from Walnut Hill School for the Performing Arts in Natick, Massachusetts; School of American Ballet in New York City; School of the Hartford City Ballet; and Pacific Northwest Ballet School in Seattle. and she has performed with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, State Ballet of Missouri, Hartford City Ballet, and Pacific Northwest Ballet. For San Francisco Opera, Broughton has been featured in several solo roles. including the pas de deux in Die Fledermaus, Eve in Mefistofele, Andromache in Les Troyens, and Cloud Flower Blossom in John Adams' Doctor Atomic.



(Paris, France) **Director and Costume Designer** Vincent Boussard made his San Francisco Opera directorial debut in 2012 with *I Capuleti e*

VINCENT BOUSSARD

i Montecchi. He began as a stage director at the Studio Theatre of the Comédie-Française in 1999, and his first opera staging was Dido and Aeneas with Les Arts Florissants in Paris and New York. Since then, his work has appeared at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie (Il Re Pastore, *Eliogabalo*, the world premiere of Benoît Mernier's Frühlingserwachen); the Handel Festival in Halle (Floridante); Aix-en-Provence Festival (Le Nozze di Figaro and La Finta Giardiniera); Berlin State Opera (Agrippina, Candide, The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny); Bavarian State Opera, Graz Opera, Oper Frankfurt (Adriana Lecouvreur and Gluck's Ezio); Hamburg State Opera (Madama Butterfly and La Fanciulla del West); Theater an der Wien

(Radamisto); Innsbruck and Baden-Baden Festivals (Don Giovanni); Royal Opera House, Stockholm (Carmen); Théâtre National du Capitole (La Favorite and Un Ballo in Maschera); Opéra National du Rhin (Louise, Les Pêcheurs de Perles, L'Amico Fritz); New National Theater in Tokyo (La Traviata); the Salzburg Easter Festival and Dresden Semperoper (Otello); Lausanne Opera (Hamlet); the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona (Un Ballo in Maschera); and the Essen Aaltotheater (Le Prophète). Upcoming projects include his Bucharest State Opera debut directing Tosca.



GEDIMINAS ŠEDUIKIS

(Utena, Lithuania) Associate Director Making his San Francisco Opera debut in *Manon*, Gediminas Šeduikis is a director at the

Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre where he has worked since 2006. He has collaborated with directors Vincent Boussard (*Manon*), David Alden (*Salome*), and Dalia Ibelhauptaitè (*Die Zauberflöte*, Werther, Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street, Káťa Kabanová, Eugene Onegin, Manon Lescaut, Così fan tutte, and Il Trovatore). He has also recently directed productions of Hänsel und Gretel and Die Fledermaus.



VINCENT LEMAIRE (Brussels, Belgium) Set designer Making his Company debut in 2012 with I Capuleti e i Montecchi, Vincent Lemaire has created sets for the Théâtre

Royal de La Monnaie, Opéra Royal de Wallonie, the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse, Opéra National de Lyon, Opéra de Marseille, Opéra National du Rhin, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Royal Opera House in Stockholm, Theater an der Wien, Innsbruck Festival, Zurich Opera, Lausanne Opera, Berlin State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Hamburg State Opera, and the Dresden Semperoper. His work with director Vincent Boussard includes La *Traviata* at the New National Theater in Tokyo and Opéra National du Rhin, Manon at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, Otello at the Salzburg Easter Festival and Dresden Semperoper, Le Prophète at the Essen Aaltotheater, Hamlet in Lausanne, and I Capuleti et i Montecchi and Un Ballo in Maschera at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona. He has also recently collaborated with director Jan Schmidt-Garre on Die Tote Stadt at the Theater St. Gallen.

GARY MARDER



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

2013, and his lighting designs most recently appeared in the Company's La Traviata, Turandot, Don Giovanni, Rigoletto, Madama Butterfly, and Dream of the Red Chamber. Marder's other work includes Madama Butterfly in Washington, D.C.; The Magic Flute in Sydney; La Traviata at Turin's Teatro Regio as well as in Tokyo; The Makropulos Case and Samson et Dalila at Houston Grand Opera; and Samson et Dalila, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Carmen, Peter Grimes, Un Ballo in Maschera, and Norma at San Diego Opera. Marder previously served as assistant resident lighting designer for the Metropolitan Opera for 12 seasons and associate resident lighting designer at New York City Opera for five years.



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

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

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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 La Traviata, Turandot, Elektra, Rigoletto, Don Giovanni, La Bohème, Aida, Madama Butterfly, Andrea Chénier, Dream of the Red Chamber, Carmen, Don Carlo, Jenůfa, and Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg. 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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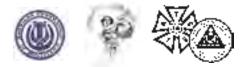
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Laura Albers



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Jennifer Cho First Violin



Dawn Harms First Violin



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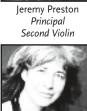


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Asuka Annie Yano First Violin







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Second Violin



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Second Violin

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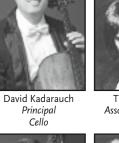
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62



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Sara Colburn Soprano



Dvora Djoraev Soprano



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Soprano



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64

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Andrew Truett

Tenor



Richard Walker Tenor





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Torlef Borsting Baritone



Jere Torkelsen

Baritone



Anders Fröhlich

Baritone

Christopher Filipowicz Bass



Bojan Knežević Bass

Cameron Henley

Baritone



William O'Neill Bass

Ken Johnson

Baritone



David Kekuewa Baritone

William Pickersgill

Bass





Baritone





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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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- Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket; no babes in arms.

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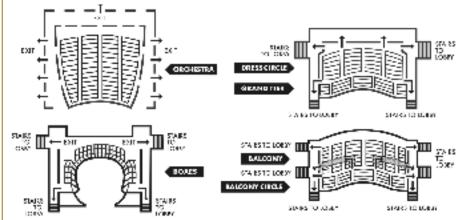
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San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center War Memorial Opera House Exit Diagram



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



BY GENERAL DIRECTOR MATTHEW SHILVOCK



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 opportu-

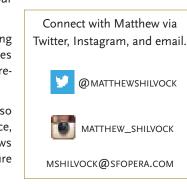
nities and how to cast roles like Cio-Cio-San to better reflect the cultural authenticity of the piece; and iii) whether there are works that last for all time, or whether there are works which will eventually become fundamentally at odds with contemporary values. San Francisco Opera is engaging in serious 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."





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