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On the cover:

David Hockney (b. 1937)
Act III, Scene I,
1 1/2" Scale, Final Version
from *Turandot*
Gouache, foamcore, color
laser copy, plaster cloth,
plasticine, papier-mâché
48 x 96 x 82"
© David Hockney
Photo credit:
Richard Schmidt

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by Steven Winn
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When it comes to understanding the West's fascination with Asia, generalizations are unlikely to be accurate or helpful; specifics are the key.
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A MESSAGE FROM

THE BOARD OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

On behalf of the Board of Directors of San Francisco Opera, welcome to our 95th season!

From ancient mythology to California history, we embark in September on nine powerful journeys that celebrate the stories of humanity. We believe you will find this to be a season of tremendously diverse, ambitious, and emotionally thrilling offerings on the War Memorial Opera House stage. From sumptuous revivals of *Turandot* and *La Traviata*, to connoisseur's dreams



DREW AULTZER

like *Elektra* and *Manon*, to one of the most highly anticipated cultural events of the year in the world premiere of John Adams' *Girls of the Golden West*, this will be a fall to remember.

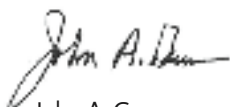
The extraordinary artistic capability of this great Company is made possible by you, our audience. We are deeply grateful to all our patrons, subscribers, and donors. You are one of the most passionate and engaged audiences in the world, and your commitment and enthusiasm sustain San Francisco Opera. Thank you for your incredible support.

We wish to extend special recognition to our Company sponsors, who provide the major underwriting that makes everything we do possible: the Dolby family, Ann & Gordon Getty, Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson, Mr. and Mrs. Franklin P. Johnson, Jr., the Edmund W. & Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, Steven M. Menzies, Bernard & Barbro Osher, Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem, Dianne & Tad Taube, the 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.

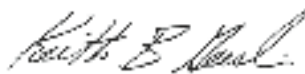
As always, we begin the season on a festive note in partnership with the San Francisco Opera Guild on our premier fundraising event of the year, Opera Ball. Opera Ball raises much needed funds to support the Company and the Opera Guild's artistic and educational programs, and we are grateful to this year's Opera Ball co-chairs, Courtney Labe and Maryam Muduroglu, for their wonderful dedication and hard work.

We also salute the artistry of Music Director Nicola Luisotti, who concludes nearly a decade of leadership at the end of the season. Nicola's contributions to the quality of our orchestra and the Company's overall musical values are exceptional, and San Francisco Opera audiences will enjoy the legacy of his work for years to come. We will never forget the countless electrifying performances he has led in our theater, and we look forward to welcoming him back to the podium in future seasons.

Enjoy the opera and revel in the music that moves the city!



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Delving Deeper into *Girls of the Golden West*

STEFAN COHEN

October Symposium to Prepare
Audiences for John Adams World Premiere



Members of the creative team of *Girls of the Golden West* (left to right): choreographer John Heginbotham, composer John Adams, bass-baritone Davóne Tines, sopranos Hye Jung Lee and Julia Bullock, baritone Elliot Madore, mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges, conductor Grant Gershon, and librettist/director Peter Sellars.

Grab your shovels and stake your claims! With the eyes and ears of the music world trained on San Francisco Opera for the highly anticipated world premiere of John Adams' *Girls of the Golden West* on November 21, local history buffs and opera fans will get a leg up on the excitement.

On Saturday, October 28, the *Girls of the Golden West* Symposium will be held in the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater at the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera. The all-day event will dig into the opera's themes, source materials, and its place within the broader context of the Gold Rush. Designed to prepare audiences for the opera and provide insightful perspectives into this critical period of California history, the symposium will be a multidisciplinary presentation of lectures, conversations, and music, including a discussion with composer John Adams (*Nixon in China* and *Doctor Atomic*) and librettist/director Peter Sellars. Authors, historians, and other Gold Rush authorities will explore topics such as "Women in the Gold Rush" and "Cultural Conflict." Rounding out the event, a set of miner and pioneer songs will be performed in period style by Theatre Comique. Tickets for the event are \$45.

Many *Girls of the Golden West* ancillary activities will be offered in collaboration with cultural and educational institutions around the Bay Area. Public exhibitions at Wells Fargo, Levi Strauss & Co., and the Society of California Pioneers provide an excellent opportunity to learn more about the history of California. Gold Rush-era artifacts from the collections of the California Historical Society, Society of California Pioneers, Levi Strauss & Co., and Museum of Performance + Design will also be on view within the Opera House lobby from November through December. In a special collaboration with the San Francisco Public Library, *The Shirley Letters*—one of the key historical sources Adams and Sellars drew upon for the opera—will be the Library's fall book club selection.

For tickets to the *Girls of the Golden West* Symposium and more information, please visit: sfoperacom.com.



BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Did You Know?

The War Memorial Opera House chandelier consists of 588 100-watt light bulbs. Created by Arthur Brown Jr., who also designed the Opera House, Veterans Building, and City Hall, the chandelier was the first use of aluminum in an architectural feature anywhere in the world.

Vodka is the deodorizer of choice for the Company's Wardrobe Department. After every performance, dressers spray the undiluted spirit on areas of costumes where perspiration collects to kill odor-causing bacteria.

With 100 players, *Elektra* has the largest orchestra in any production in Company history. Among the more unusual instruments is the heckelphone. The lowest instrument in the oboe family (it reaches as far down as an A below middle C), it is mostly heard in *Elektra* in combination with other winds and brass.

An inspiration for Puccini in writing *Turandot* was a music box belonging to an acquaintance, Baron Fassini, who had been in China. In Act I, a children's chorus is heard singing the Jasmine Flower song "Mou-Li Hua," which was one of Puccini's discoveries from the music box.

The first San Francisco performance of *La Traviata* was at the American Theater on August 13, 1859. Presented by the Bianchi Opera Troupe and featuring Giovanna Bianchi in the title role, Verdi's opera was described by the *Alta California* as a work "founded on a plot similar to *Camille*. The music is exceedingly brilliant, being of a lighter character than most of this composer's works, and it abounds in a host of gems, which will soon become popular."





Lianna Haroutounian In Recital

Armenian soprano **Lianna Haroutounian** will give her San Francisco recital debut on **Saturday, November 25 at 3 p.m.** in the Veterans Building's Herbst Theatre. The acclaimed opera star, who made a sensational San Francisco Opera debut in *Tosca* in 2014 and returned triumphantly last season in the title role of *Madama Butterfly*, will return for her only Bay Area appearance in a program of works by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Komitas, Rossini, Bellini, and Puccini, as well as Armenian folk songs. Georgian pianist Tamara Sanikidze will provide musical accompaniment. For tickets, call City Box Office at (415) 392-4400.



CORY WEAVER



Kip Cranna



Sheri Greenawald



Lori Harrison



Jose Maria Condemi

Interactive Adult Opera Workshops Return

Education Department adds to its fall offerings with *Drinks & Drama*

Back by popular demand, the **Overture Workshops for Adults**, a first-hand look at how opera is created and produced for the stage, will take place from **Monday, September 25 through Monday, October 23**. This fall's series will focus on the four main pillars of opera creation—story, music, production, and direction—with featured guests including Dramaturg Kip Cranna, Opera Center Director Sheri Greenawald, Properties Master Lori Harrison, stage director Jose Maria Condemi, and artists and musicians from across the Company. Learn more at sfopera.com/overtureseries.

Also for the opera-curious: join the Education Department on **Friday, October 20 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.** for **Drinks & Drama: A Taste of the Season**, a social-educational event featuring special live performances and mini-cocktails tailored to pair with each opera. Photographs, musical excerpts, and video clips from the San Francisco Opera Archives will immerse you in the fall 2017 season. Learn more at sfopera.com/drinksanddrama.

Special Concerts This Fall

MATTHEW WASHBURN



The San Francisco Opera Chorus, led by Ian Robertson

The **San Francisco Opera Chorus** will offer a public concert of sacred, secular, and operatic music on **Thursday, November 30 at 8 p.m.**, in the intimate Taube Atrium Theater of the Wilsey Center for Opera. Under the baton of Chorus Director Ian Robertson and Associate Chorus Master and pianist Fabrizio Corona, the 47-member chorus will take center stage in musical offerings by Bach, di Lasso, Elgar, Ešenvalds, Massenet, O'Regan, Poulenc, Praetorius, Puccini, Purcell, Verdi, and Wagner. Tickets are \$35 and available now at the San Francisco Opera Box Office or by visiting sfopera.com.

Making their West Coast concert debut, the popular New Zealand trio **Sol3 Mio** will take to the War Memorial Opera House stage on **Friday, December 1 at 7:30 p.m.** for a special holiday concert, Kiwi-style. This exclusive San Francisco Opera presentation of Samoan brothers and Adler Fellow tenors Pene Pati and Amitai Pati and their baritone Samoan cousin Moses Mackay will feature the singers in a concert of holiday favorites, operatic works, crossover hits, and cherished songs from the South Pacific. Robert Mollicone will conduct the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

To learn more about Sol3 Mio and to hear excerpts, visit Sol3Mio.com. Tickets range from \$20 to \$100 and are available at the San Francisco Opera Box Office or by visiting sfopera.com.

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Tenor Amitai Pati, baritone Moses Mackay, and tenor Pene Pati perform at the War Memorial Opera House on December 1.



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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA *Profile*

Shinji Eshima

San Francisco Opera Orchestra, Bass

One of the most serene yet foreboding moments in all of opera happens during the prelude to Richard Wagner's *Das Rheingold*. Eight basses quietly sustain a single low E-flat for four measures. One of the basses you will hear in the orchestra pit during next summer's *Ring* cycle will be the 1843 Plumerel played by Shinji Eshima, who joined the Company in 1980. "The basses start on that note," he explains, "and the rest of the orchestra gradually gets layered in with E-flat arpeggios." The bassists play E-flat for 136 measures before a Rhinemaiden suddenly begins to sing. Wagner's swirling setting expresses the depth and building flow of the Rhine River, creeping into your consciousness and opening Wagner's epic musical journey. About this prelude, Shinji says, "I associate E-flat with nature. ... Maestro Runnicles [who leads the Company's *Ring* in 2018] has said that he loves E-flat in particular because it makes the orchestra 'feel good.' I'll never forget him saying that."

Shinji's Plumerel double bass has appeared at the Paris Opéra, Metropolitan Opera, New York Philharmonic, and New York City Ballet. A visitor to Paris' Musée d'Orsay today can see the scroll of Shinji's Plumerel in Edgar Degas' 1870 painting *L'Orchestre de l'Opéra*; its original owner, Achille Gouffé, a soloist of the Paris Opéra, also appears in the painting. An oil sketch of the work is at the Legion of Honor Museum. Shinji's Juilliard teacher David Walter was the principal bass of the New York City Ballet orchestra and played the Plumerel for more than 30 years. Six years after his death, it was passed on to Shinji. The bass made its War Memorial Opera House debut in 2008 during the 75th anniversary of San Francisco Ballet. (Shinji joined that company in 1982.)



CORY WEAVER

Shinji's wife, Sandy, is a former dancer for NYCB, and because she currently stages Balanchine's ballets, she has access to NYCB's original videos. Shinji says that "virtually anything I hear with a bass on these recordings [from *Agon* to *Jewels*] is *this* bass."

A Japanese-American born in Berkeley, Shinji received his education at Stanford and Juilliard. Today, he is a faculty member at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and San Francisco State University.

When Shinji is not performing or teaching, he is composing. Last year, he collaborated with poet Scott Bourne on a chamber piece called *Bourne to Shelley*, which had its world premiere at SF Opera Lab's *ChamberWORKS*. San

Francisco Ballet commissioned him to create music for two ballets, *RAKU* (2011) and *Swimmer* (2015). The puppetry play *E.O. 9066*, featuring original music by Shinji, was recently performed at the opening of the Topaz Museum, dedicated to preserving the history of the World War II internment camp experience in Delta, Utah. The play's title derives from the Executive Order 9066, which forced 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry to leave their homes and transfer to internment camps. 11,000 of them were sent to Topaz, including Shinji's father. The theme from *E.O. 9066* is a variation of a work Shinji composed originally for violin and double bass called *August 6*, which premiered at Grace Cathedral on the 50th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing. Shinji later decided to orchestrate *August 6* for SF Ballet's *RAKU*.

A documentary of *RAKU* will have its world premiere screening as part of the San Francisco Dance Film Festival on October 20 at the Brava Theater Center. As a musician in the orchestra pit, composer, and teacher, Shinji Eshima demonstrates that music is deep with history and rich with storytelling.

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RICHARD WAGNER

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Cycle 1—June 12–17, 2018

Cycle 2—June 19–24, 2018

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Grazie, Nicola!

“From the very first day, this company has made me a better man, a better artist, a better thinker—better everything. I discovered myself here.”

—Music Director Nicola Luisotti



CORY WEAVER

There may have been a time, when he was working as an apprentice blacksmith in Tuscany where he grew up, that Nicola Luisotti wondered and fretted a little about what lay ahead for him. Any such worries were fleeting. In retrospect, it seems inevitable that a conductor's baton and not a forger's hammer and tongs would become the defining tool of his working life.

From the moment he first sat down at a piano as a child and played something by ear he had just heard, Luisotti felt the musical pulse take hold. At nine, he began studying the organ and thought with characteristic fervor, “I will be the most famous organist in the world”—a conviction he recalls now with both a touch of honor for his youthful ambition and self-aware amusement. By age 12, he was studying with a taskmaster teacher in Lucca and learning Bach, Buxtehude, and Frescobaldi.

It turned out, as audiences in San Francisco and around the world well know, that Luisotti was destined to play an instrument far more

complicated than even the most formidable church organ. Opera—with its multiple interlocking parts of singers and orchestra, chorus and scenography, direction, lighting, costumes, and choreography—would engage the full range of his powers and passion.

This season, in what amounts to a bittersweet victory lap, Luisotti will end his nine-year run as San Francisco Opera's music director by conducting *Turandot* and *La Traviata*. The 55-year-old Italian has accepted an associate music director position at Madrid's Teatro Real, where he will focus on his core strength of the Italian repertoire: *Aida*, *Don Carlo*, *Tosca*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Other bookings will take him to opera houses across the globe, from New York to Paris, Munich to Rome, London to Valencia. Luisotti is also a prolific symphonic conductor, with plans to enlarge on that growing résumé in the coming years. One project is to complete a full multi-city Mahler cycle.

For all his wanderings, he's not about to sever his ties to San Francisco, where he has brought his animating touch to some 35

productions of everything from Puccini and Verdi to Mozart, Bizet, Wagner, Strauss, and the 2015 world premiere of Marco Tutino's *Two Women*. Luisotti is already booked to conduct here in 2019 and 2020. The operas have not been announced, but both dates are in the fall.

"Why the fall?" he recently asked in a rhetorical deadpan in his Opera House office. "Because there are mushrooms."

The answer was both playfully waggish and dead-on earnest. Luisotti, who is as compelling, emotionally labile, and lyrically graceful in person as he is on the podium, brings the full weight of his personality to whatever topic is at hand. As a committed mushroom hunter, serious cook, and eater—pursuits he shares with his wife of 28 years, Rita—Luisotti was proud to offer a cellphone photo of the fresh porcini the couple had gathered in Sonoma County. But he wasn't about to be more specific about the location, offering only an enigmatic smile in response. Even a silence from the sleekly handsome Luisotti is eloquent.

When asked about leaving his San Francisco Opera music director post, he cleared the air of anything frivolous with a pause. "I'm not the same man I was when I came here," he said. "From the very first day, this company has made me a better man, a better artist, a better thinker—better everything. I discovered myself here."

The career change, he went on, was a painful but necessary decision. "About a decade," by his accounting, is the life span of an effective musical leader. (Luisotti first conducted here with *La Forza del Destino* in 2005 and assumed the music directorship in September 2009.) "I don't think you can be the same leader at the same level for 20 years. I've seen that happen too many times."

Luisotti's imprint on the Company, both to audiences and his colleagues, remains as fresh and vital as the day he arrived, hired by former General Director David Gockley. "It's in his complete commitment to the music," said Opera Orchestra Concertmaster Kay Stern, "his unquestionable desire for us to give everything at every moment to the emotional content of the score. I think we have learned a great deal from him and been inspired by him, and in many ways come alive because of him."

Like Stern, who described Luisotti's uncanny ability to embody an intention without having to verbalize it, Principal Oboist Mingjia Liu focused on Luisotti's communicative powers. "You don't guess," said Liu. "You don't think of



The maestro's in the house: (opposite) Nicola Luisotti at the Aida dress rehearsal in November 2016 and (above and left) from a July 2012 performance.

TERRENCE MCCARTHY



TERRENCE MCCARTHY

Top: “San Francisco is a great city full of open-minded, open-hearted people,” says Luisotti who ends his nine-year tenure as music director at the end of the season.

Middle: Nicola and friends—with baritone George Gagnidze and mezzo-soprano J’Nai Bridges at the 2016 Opera Ball.

Bottom, left to right: Then-General Director David Gockley and tenor Plácido Domingo at a 2010 press conference for *Cyrano de Bergerac*; tenor Michael Fabiano and soprano Nadine Sierra at the David Gockley Gala in June 2016.

what you need to do to please him.” Liu summoned a *Madama Butterfly* performance in the summer of 2014 as especially memorable, with Luisotti “so deeply buried inside the characters that for a third of the time his eyes were closed. Some older members of the orchestra told me that they hadn’t experienced that kind of night in 20 years.”

For an observer seated in the orchestra pit during a performance of this summer’s *Rigoletto*, the conductor’s full-body absorption was apparent. Trusting his orchestra to follow his suavely smooth beat, Luisotti fixed his attention on the stage, using a single right-hand finger to cue and coax the soloists while reserving four fingers on his left for the dark-cloaked chorus. Smiles, empathic grimaces, and gentle supplications played across Luisotti’s face, as if he were experiencing every pulse of feeling onstage.

Baritone Quinn Kelsey, who sang the title role, said Luisotti creates an “electric” connection with singers. “He wants so much color and character through the singing of the text, and he’s not afraid to tell you.” There’s something “terrible genuine” about him. Creating a visceral connection of music to audience, said Kelsey, is foremost. “You can only accomplish this if you are willing to step outside of yourself and your comfort zone, in order to produce something really magical on stage.”

Tenor Michael Fabiano, who starred in the Company’s recent *Don Carlo* and *Luisa Miller*, cited the conductor’s “unique ability to merge rigor and emotion. He is also an intensely passionate man, which inspires everyone around him to meet him at his level.”

Luisotti, who spent part of his career as a chorus director, pays particular attention to that ensemble. Citing the conductor’s deep knowledge of both the libretto and architecture of a piece, San Francisco Opera Chorus Director Ian Robertson said Luisotti has crafted a unified and colorful choral sound here. “There’s always something riveting about the way he goes straight to the point. He will stop a rehearsal, say a few things, and get his results right away.” In *Rigoletto* it was an urgent but surreptitious “loud whisper” he wanted from the abductors—just one of the many details that become “integral,” as Robertson put it, to the whole.

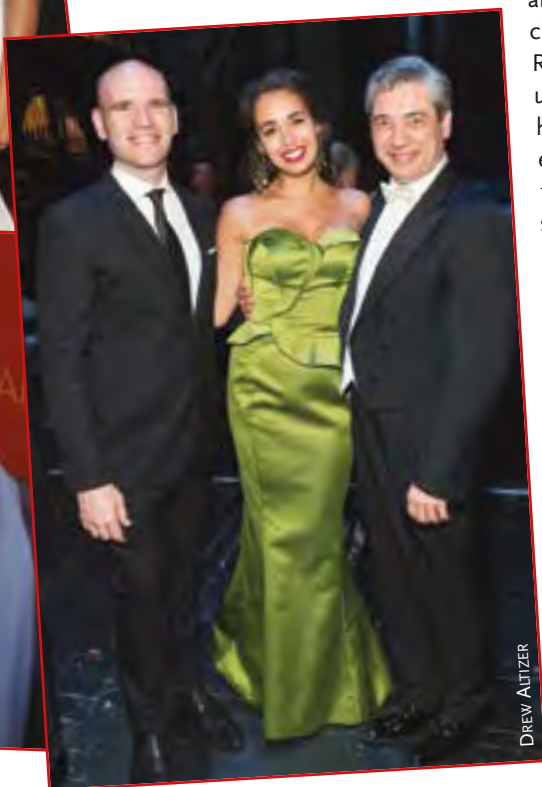
Luisotti tends to be less analytical and more instinctual about his art. “Technique? Oh no, I don’t think so much about it,” he said in his office, comparing conducting to driving a car. “You just do it—you stop on the red, you go



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From top to bottom: Nicola at the fortepiano for the Company's 2013 run of *Così fan tutte*; jamming with friends in his hometown of Bargecchia at age 14; a 15-year-old Nicola with sister, Biancamaria, and mother, Rita; foraging for mushrooms in Sonoma; with wife Rita Simonini

on the green." A few minutes later, he returned to the topic, citing the importance of preparation and knowing everything he can about the score, history, and context of an opera. In first rehearsals, he tends not to talk much, reading straight through a piece from beginning to end. Only then will Luisotti "try to get inside the story to discover why there is an accent here, a crescendo there."

An opera orchestra is "playing the soundtrack of the story," Luisotti said, illustrating the point by darting across the room to a piano and playing an ardent theme from the Sergio Leone film *Once Upon a Time in America*.

"Our life is inside the music," he said. "Without the music we are nothing." Lines like that come out of him without a hint of hyperbole. "Music is forever. It comes from eternity. What is the Big Bang? It means *sound*."

The youngest of five children, Luisotti freely admits he was babied and indulged growing up, even by his father, a carpenter, who thought blacksmithing might be a useful trade for an artistic son with uncertain prospects. Music was ever-present. His mother sang as a soloist in the church choir. His father played the clarinet in the village banda. The clanging church bells in his hometown of Bargecchia were the purported inspiration for the ones Puccini used, the melody slightly transposed, in the first act of *Tosca*. Not a note of Luisotti's musical past, it seems, has been forgotten. He brought himself and his listener to the brink of tears when he returned to the piano and played the minor-mode lullaby his mother used to sing.

Several days later, over a Mexican lunch with Rita and another friend, Luisotti described himself at one point as "happily depressed. I have a smiling mask over something melancholic." He wasn't talking about music at the moment, but it's that same ability to hold contrasting strong emotions in balance that has distinguished so many of his performances here.

Rita, who manages many aspects of her husband's busy career, smiled serenely as Nicola described the couple's courtship and first kiss and their custom of eating a home-cooked meal late and watching a movie on TV after one of his performances. While a move to Europe is still close to a year off, the conversation took a wistful turn to their time in San Francisco.

"The United States changed our life," said Luisotti. "This is a great city full of open-minded, open-hearted people." Rita seconded the feeling: "We will miss it so much."

But then again, as Luisotti said with one of his embracing grins, "We'll be back." 🌸

Steven Winn is a San Francisco writer and critic whose work has appeared in *Art News*, *California*, *Humanities*, *The New York Times*, and *Symphony*. He previously wrote about the Merola Opera Program's 60th anniversary for *San Francisco Opera Magazine*.



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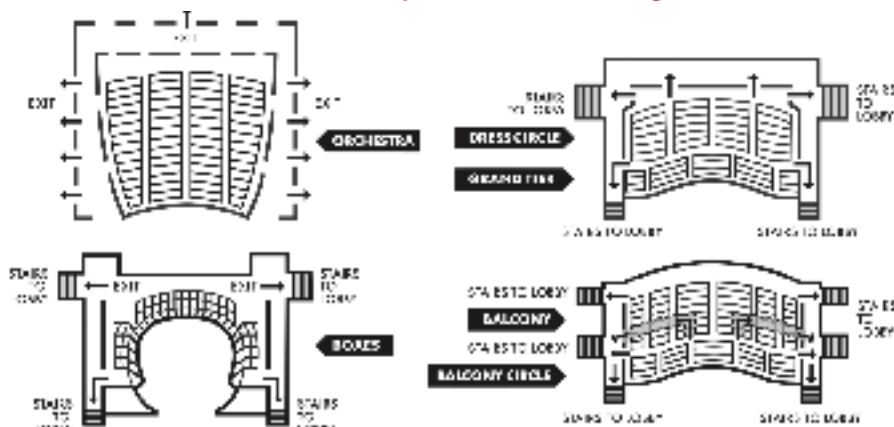
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Once again, the unprecedented generosity of Cynthia and John Gunn has set the stage for a dazzling season at San Francisco Opera. Since 2002, when John joined the Opera Board, the couple has underwritten numerous productions and provided exceptional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

In September 2008, the Gunns made a historic commitment—believed to be the largest gift ever made by individuals to an American opera company—to help fund the signature projects of then-General Director David Gockley, including new operas and productions, multimedia projects, and outreach programs. This season, the Gunns' inspired generosity is helping make possible five productions—*Turandot*, *Elektra*, *Manon*, *Girls of the Golden West*, and the *Ring* cycle.

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

John is the former chairman and CEO of Dodge & Cox

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

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

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

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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 grace 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.

Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem/Conductors Fund, Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund, and Emerging Stars Fund (Production Sponsor, *Turandot*; Sponsor, Maestro Luisotti)

After a career devoted to his publishing businesses in Japan and Europe, the creation of Clos Pegase Winery in California’s Napa Valley, and his art collection, Jan Shrem, in joyous partnership with his wife Maria Manetti Shrem, is bringing his focus and affection to philanthropic causes that advance education and the performing and visual arts. Though they grew up half-a-world apart, Jan and Maria both developed a love of opera at a young age. While their lives led them each around the globe, their individual passions eventually led them to San Francisco Opera, and to each other. With a



J HENRY FAIR

substantial multi-year commitment, Company Sponsors Jan and Maria have expanded their support with the establishment of three different funds. The *Conductors Fund* helps ensure the continued appearances of Maestro Nicola Luisotti and other Italian conductors in the orchestra pit. The *Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund*, helps bring today’s most compelling artists in Italian repertoire to San Francisco Opera, and the *Emerging Stars Fund* supports the Company in showcasing several exciting rising young stars on our stage throughout the season.



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As San Francisco Opera’s corporate Season Sponsor for over a decade, Wells Fargo is a proud supporter of the arts in the Bay Area. Wells Fargo’s philosophy of investing in community institutions encourages a culture of artistic achievement and growth, which strengthens the communities in which we live and work. Founded in 1852, the company celebrated its 165th anniversary this year, and supporting arts and culture has been a part of its history since the days when Wells Fargo stagecoaches brought actors, musicians and other performing artists to the

West. As the oldest and largest financial services company headquartered in California, Well Fargo has top financial professionals providing business banking, investment, brokerage, trust, mortgage, insurance, consumer finance and much more. Wells Fargo has helped generations of families build, manage, preserve, and transfer wealth with personalized advice and services to satisfy all their customers’ financial needs and help them succeed financially.

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Joan and David Traitel/Great Singers Fund (Sponsors, Martina Serafin, *Turandot*; Christine Goerke and Adrienne Pieczonka, *Elektra*)

“Without great singers, opera is not all it could be,” says San Francisco Opera board member Joan Traitel. “That’s why my husband and I approached David Gockley with the idea of creating a special way of supporting singers exclusively.” The result was the Great Singers Fund, launched by the Traitels in 2008 to provide San Francisco Opera with enhanced support to attract the world’s best singers. Joan, a member of the Opera’s board of directors since 1998, and her husband David were production sponsors for several years before founding the Great Singers Fund. “The Fund makes a difference in the quality of opera in San Francisco,” Joan explains. “I am thrilled to see the remarkably talented Martina Serafin, Christine Goerke, and Adrienne Pieczonka returning to our stage. All three have been performing in the world’s greatest opera houses for years, and I am eager to see them back in San Francisco. 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.”



KRISTEN LOVEN



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.



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

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

HALL Wines (Official Wine Sponsor, 2017–18 Season)

Craig and Kathryn Hall, HALL Napa Valley, are delighted to be the official wine sponsors for the 2017–2018 season. Recognized as leading luxury Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir producers, the Halls have aimed to incorporate art and sustainability into the tapestry of each of their operations. Each of their wine country properties—HALL Wines St. Helena and Rutherford, WALT Sonoma and SENZA Hotel—display a part of their collection of modern art.

Craig is chairman and founder of Dallas-based HALL Group, and a six-time author. He and his wife, Kathryn co-wrote New York Times bestseller, *A Perfect Score*, a story that describes the art and business of creating a 21st century winery. A life-long entrepreneur and investor, in addition to the vineyard and winery business, his professional interests today include real estate, venture capital, technology and hotels. Previously, Craig Hall was part

owner of the Dallas Cowboys; formed one of the first savings and loans in Michigan; founded one of the first for-profit HMOs in the country; and participated, along with Time, Inc., in growing the nation's largest chain of health and sports clubs.

Kathryn began her career as Assistant City Attorney in Berkeley, California, later joining Safeway Stores, where she was responsible for developing and administering one of the nation's first and largest affirmative action programs. She and her brother managed their family's Mendocino vineyard property from 1982 to 1992. From 1997 to 2001, Kathryn was the United States Ambassador to Austria. She is actively involved in the HALL and WALT winery operations.

"We are very pleased to be the official wine partner for the San Francisco Opera. Its commitment to artistic excellence and to the community has set a standard that we admire and are proud to support," stated Craig & Kathryn Hall.

Official wines for the 2017–2018 Opera season include HALL's 2013 'Coeur' Cabernet Sauvignon, sourced from the historic Bergfeld Vineyard in St. Helena known for its gravelly, low vigor soils and cooling influence of Pacific breezes from the North. The fruit from this region is stylistically lush with a dense core of dark briary fruit. For those wanting to enjoy a white wine, HALL's 2016 Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc is crisp and bright, and driven by citrus and fruit flavors. The grapes are sourced from the cooler regions of Napa Valley. For more information, please visit www.HALLwines.com or www.WALTwines.com.



DREW ALTIZER



United Airlines (Production Sponsor, *Turandot*)

United is committed to serving the communities where our customers and employees live and work. As a global airline, we focus on promoting awareness of cultural diversity by supporting organizations that bring the diversity of the world to local communities. United is the official airline of San Francisco Opera and flies artists from around the world to the front of the stage. San Francisco Opera is grateful for the continued partnership and thanks United for its generous support of *Turandot* and the 2017–18 Season.



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2017–18 REPERTORY

TURANDOT

Giacomo Puccini

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

December 3, 6, 9

Production made possible, in part, by:

Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey;

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

Burgess & Elizabeth Jamieson;

Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem; San Francisco Opera Guild;

and United Airlines.

ELEKTRA

Richard Strauss

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

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

LA TRAVIATA

Giuseppe Verdi

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

Production made possible, in part, by:

Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem; and Chevron.

MANON

Jules Massenet

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

Production made possible, in part, by

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn.

GIRLS OF THE GOLDEN WEST

WORLD PREMIERE

Music by John Adams

Libretto by Peter Sellars

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

Production made possible, in part, by:

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn; Jane Bernstein & Bob Ellis;

and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG

Richard Wagner

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

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Giacomo Puccini

TURANDOT

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Matthew Shilvock,
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Nicola Luisotti,
Music Director

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This production is made possible, in part, by
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Maestro Luisotti's appearance is made possible by
the Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem Conductors Fund.

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

Additional funding is provided by Jerome L. & Thao N. Dodson.

TURANDOT

ACT I

At sunset before the Imperial Palace, a Mandarin reads an edict: any prince seeking to marry Princess Turandot must first answer three riddles. If he fails, he must die. The latest suitor, the Prince of Persia, is to be executed at the moon's rising; bloodthirsty citizens urge the executioner on. In the tumult, a slave girl, Liù, kneels by her aged master, Timur, who has fallen. Calaf recognizes the old man as his long-lost father, the vanquished king of Tartary. When Timur reveals that only Liù has remained faithful to him, Calaf asks why. She replies it is because once, long ago, he, Calaf, smiled at her. As the sky darkens, the mob again cries for blood but greets the moon with a sudden, fearful silence. The onlookers are further moved when the Prince of Persia passes by and calls upon the princess. Calaf also demands that she appear; as if in answer, Turandot, with a contemptuous gesture, bids the execution to proceed. As the death cry is heard from the distance, Calaf, transfixed by the beauty of the unattainable princess, strides to the gong that announces a new suitor. Turandot's three ministers, Ping, Pang, and Pong, try to discourage him. When Timur and Liù also beg him to reconsider, Calaf seeks to comfort them; but as their pleas reach new intensity, he strikes the gong and calls Turandot's name.

ACT II

In a palace pavilion, Ping, Pang, and Pong lament Turandot's bloody reign, hoping that love will conquer her icy heart and that peace will return. The three let their thoughts dwell on their beautiful country homes, but are brought back to reality by the noise of the populace gathering to hear Turandot question the new suitor.

In front of the palace, the aged Emperor, seated on a high throne, vainly asks Calaf to reconsider. Turandot enters to describe how her beautiful ancestor, Princess Lo-u Ling, was brutally slain by a conquering prince. In revenge, Turandot has turned against all men and determined that none shall ever possess her. Then, facing Calaf, she poses her first question: "What is born each night and dies each dawn?" "Hope," Calaf answers correctly. Unnerved, Turandot continues: "What flickers red and warm like a flame, yet is not fire?" "Blood," replies Calaf after a moment's pause. Turandot delivers her third riddle: "What is like ice but burns?" A tense silence prevails until Calaf triumphantly cries, "Turandot!" While the crowd gives thanks, the princess begs her father not to give her to the stranger, but to no avail. Calaf, hoping to win her love, generously offers Turandot a challenge of his own: if she can learn his name by dawn, he will forfeit his life. Turandot accepts as the crowd repeats the Emperor's praises.

ACT III

In the palace gardens, Calaf hears a proclamation: on pain of death, no one in Peking shall sleep until Turandot learns the stranger's name. While the prince ponders his impending joy, Ping, Pang, and Pong try to bribe him to leave the city. As the mob threatens him to learn his name, soldiers drag in Liù and Timur; horrified, Calaf tries to convince the mob that neither knows his secret. When Turandot appears, commanding the dazed Timur to speak, Liù cries out that she alone knows the stranger's identity but will never reveal it. Though she is tortured, she remains silent. Impressed by such endurance, Turandot asks Liù's secret. "Love," replies the girl. The princess signals the soldiers to intensify the torture. Liù snatches a dagger and kills herself. The crowd, fearful of her dead spirit, forms a funeral procession. Turandot remains alone to confront Calaf, who passionately kisses her. Feeling emotion for the first time, Turandot weeps. The prince, now sure of his victory, reveals his identity. As the people hail the Emperor, Turandot triumphantly approaches his throne, announcing the stranger's name: "Love." Calaf rushes to embrace her and the court hails the power of love and life.

First performance: Milan, Teatro alla Scala; April 25, 1926

First performance in the U.S.: New York, Metropolitan Opera; November 16, 1926

First San Francisco Opera performance: September 19, 1927

Turandot has been performed in 16 previous seasons at San Francisco Opera. For complete casting and other information, visit archive.sfopera.com.

Personnel: 9 principals, 79 choristers, 27 children onstage, 13 children offstage, 32 supernumeraries, 7 dancers; **167 total**

Orchestra: 3 flutes (2 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 1 English horn, 2 clarinets, 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 cimbasso, 2 harps, 1 timpani, 6 percussion, 1 celeste, 40 strings (12 first violins, 9 second violins, 7 violas, 7 cellos, 5 basses); **73 total**

Backstage: 2 saxophones, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, woodblock, gong, organ; **13 total**

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

Conductor
Nicola Luisotti

Production and Design
David Hockney

Director
Garnett Bruce

Costume Designer
Ian Falconer

Original Lighting Designer
Thomas J. Munn

Lighting Designer
Gary Marder

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Choreographer/Dance Master
Lawrence Pech

Fight Director
Dave Maier

Assistant Director
Jimmy Marcheso

Assistant Conductor
Robert Mollicone

Prompter
Tamara Sanikidze

Musical Preparation
John Churchwell
Ronny Michael Greenberg
Bryndon Hassman
Fabrizio Corona
Dennis Doubin

Supertitles
Christopher Bergen

Stage Manager
Darin Burnett

Assistant Stage Managers
Jayne O'Hara
Andrew Landis
Thea Railey

Costume Supervisor
Kristi Johnson

Head of Wig and Makeup
Jeanna Parham

Co-production with Lyric Opera of Chicago

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2017 AT 8 PM
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 AT 7:30 PM
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 AT 7:30 PM
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 AT 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 AT 2 PM
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 AT 7:30 PM

Opera in three acts by **Giacomo Puccini** (last duet and finale by **Franco Alfano**)

Libretto by **Giuseppe Adami** and **Renato Simoni**

Based on Friedrich Schiller's version of a play by **Carlo Gozzi**

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TURANDOT

(Sung in Italian with English supertitles)

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>A Mandarin</i>	Brad Walker†
<i>Liù</i>	Toni Marie Palmertree†
<i>Timur</i>	Raymond Aceto
<i>Calaf</i>	Brian Jagde
<i>The Prince of Persia</i>	Stephen Cannon*
<i>Ping</i>	Joo Won Kang
<i>Pang</i>	Julius Ahn
<i>Pong</i>	Joel Sorensen
<i>Handmaidens</i>	Kathleen Bayler Virginia Pluth
<i>Emperor Altoum</i>	Robert Brubaker*
<i>Princess Turandot</i>	Martina Serafin

*Imperial guards, executioners, children, priests, dignitaries,
wise men, attendants, populace*

*San Francisco Opera debut †Current Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: Legendary Peking, China

ACT I

Before the walls of Peking

—INTERMISSION—

ACT II

Scene 1: A pavilion

Scene 2: Outside the palace

—INTERMISSION—

ACT III

Scene 1: The palace garden

Scene 2: Inside the palace

The performance will last approximately two hours and fifty 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.

The

TURANDOT

Puzzle



BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Giacomo Puccini’s final and famously unfinished opera *Turandot* is about asking difficult questions, no matter the consequences. Indeed, producing *Turandot* on the American stage today evokes difficult questions that—unlike the famous “three riddles” of the opera—lack clear answers. *Turandot* is pageantry, comedy, and fantasy, but it is by no means a work about China or Chinese people. Rather, it derives from another time rife with bizarre notions of “Orientalism.” How should we in the 21st century approach this problem? How do today’s audiences, infused with greater awareness and sensitivity to Asian cultures, see these characters and situations on the stage? Is *Turandot* even possible today? Two Asian-American authors with impressive experience in the world of opera, David Henry Hwang and Amy Tan, try to help us through this maze.

First, we must understand what *Turandot* is before we can address the challenges in it. Puccini (1857–1924) was the most popular and commercially successful opera composer of his day. His three most successful operas—*La Bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), and *Madama Butterfly* (1904)—made him an international household name and are at the center of every opera company’s repertory. Those operas and almost all his others were created with an eye toward operatic realism. The character of Butterfly or Cio-Cio-San, for example, was meant to be perceived as an actual person one might have met in real life. The action of *Tosca* takes place a hundred years prior to its premiere, but it was still meant to be understood as actual people in a real time and place, down to a specific location (an actual church in Rome), date (June 17, 1800), and time of day (Act I begins at 3 in the afternoon).

Most of Puccini’s other operas have the same atmosphere, that is, until *Turandot*. The libretto tells us we are in “Peking, in legendary times.” Right away we know we are in a different dimension compared to *Madama Butterfly* or *Tosca*.

There is a grand tradition of “exoticism” (from the Greek word for “foreign”) in 19th- and early 20th-century opera, often involving time (“way back then in legendary times”) as well as geography (“way over there”). This draws a magical frame around the story that makes impossible things possible, and therefore ancient Asia made a great background for operatic exoticism, e.g., Ceylon (Bizet’s *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*), Japan (Mascagni’s *Iris*), India (Massenet’s *Le Roi de Lahore*), and an imaginary Empire of the South Seas (Richard Strauss’ *Die Frau ohne Schatten*). The characters in these and other operatic exercises in

“It boils down to a question of responsibility to the audience, to the artists, and the work itself.

Since this is an opera, the music— which is what people love about Turandot— must reign supreme.”—author Amy Tan



JULIAN JOHNSON



LAWRENCE B. MORTON

PETE PIETERS

Left: Umberto Brunelleschi's costume design for Princess Turandot, created for the 1926 world premiere at La Scala.

Clockwise from top: From the Company's 1927 season, Anne Roselle (Turandot) and Armand Tokatyan (Calaf) with the San Francisco Opera Chorus in the Act III finale at Civic Auditorium; soprano Birgit Nilsson in San Francisco Opera's 1964 Turandot; a 1977 backstage shot of Montserrat Caballé in the title role; the issue of casting according to ethnicity has rocked the opera world, as playwright and librettist David Henry Hwang (right, with Dream of the Red Chamber composer Bright Sheng) knows so well.



CAROLINE CRAWFORD

exoticism can do what “actual” people cannot, socially and even existentially. So debate over racist attitudes and cultural trivialization is irrelevant in fantasy operas, right?

Not necessarily, according to author David Henry Hwang, who warns us against using the legendary label of *Turandot* as a sort of “hall pass” to permit pernicious attitudes. “We tend to want to ‘hide in plain sight’ behind some story that gives us cover,” he explains. “It is possible that the fantasy aspects of *Turandot* appeal to us precisely because they ‘abstractify’ the difficult issues into legend.”

The modern equivalent of traditional European exoticism is science fiction: when modern auteurs want to tell a story that is slightly beyond what is possible, they set it not in legendary Asia but in outer space, as in “a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...” The racial issues and the specific associations of Asian characters with the forces of evil in early science fiction (the Han in *Buck Rogers* and the Emperor Ming of *Flash Gordon*, for example) are sufficient to demonstrate Hwang’s caveat. There has even been debate about negative racial archetypes embedded in some characters of the *Star Wars* franchise, proving that “legendary” does not absolve a work from charges of toxic racial preconceptions.

The question becomes how best to produce this work on stage in practical terms, especially the casting of the roles. The issue of casting according to ethnicity has thundered on Broadway, as playwright Hwang (*M. Butterfly*) knows so well. Is this a way to address the exoticism in *Turandot*? Author Amy Tan doubts that casting according to ethnicity is appropriate in this case.

“It boils down to a question of responsibility,” she explains, “to the audience, to the artists, and the work itself. Since this is an opera, the music—which is what people love about *Turandot*—must reign supreme.” This cannot mean the music removes responsibility for all non-musical issues in the work, an argument that the opera world’s experience with Richard Wagner (to cite the most obvious example) has shown to be untenable. It means that the work must be understood first and foremost from the point of view of the music’s needs. “The first



DREW ALTIZER

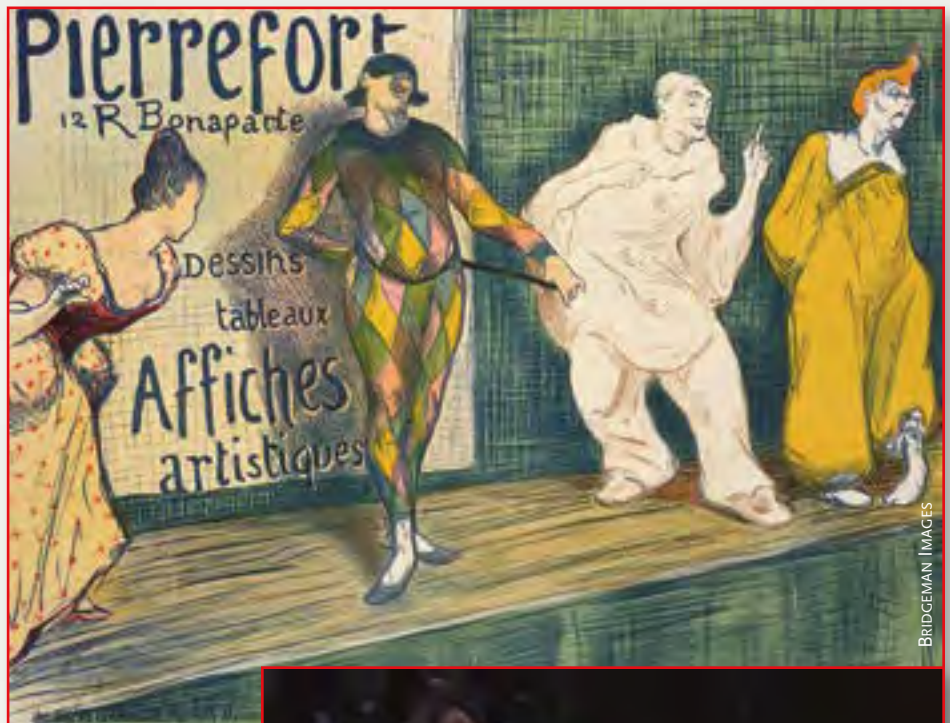
Puccini's models for the characters of Ping, Pang, and Pong weren't Chinese, but rather were from the *commedia dell'arte* tradition. A late 19th-century French poster (top) is set against a photo from the Company's 2011 production of *Turandot* (bottom).

requirement for the role of Turandot is that she be able to manage the music," says Tan. For *Turandot*'s music is extremely difficult, even by operatic standards. "You need to have the best singers for the role regardless of their ethnicity," Tan continues. "Otherwise, it's unfair to them and to everyone. It becomes comical in the wrong way."

Tan knows when there is an appropriate time for casting along ethnic lines at the opera. She wrote the libretto for the opera *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, based on her 2001 novel of the same name, with music by Stewart Wallace. Produced by San Francisco Opera in 2008, it starred the late Zheng Cao, a Chinese-born American singer whose signature role was, in fact, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*. The role in *The Bonesetter's Daughter* is double: Ruth, a Chinese-American woman, and her "old-country" mother named Lu-Ling (recalling, interestingly, a long-dead character, Lo-u Ling, mentioned in Act II of *Turandot* and said to be "reborn" in the title character). Cao's character is meant to be understood as alive today. This is very different from *Turandot*, says Tan. "There is nothing representative in *Turandot* that is Chinese. ... To have casting tied to it would be forcing a point that makes no point."

Hwang reminds us that the *Turandot* story ultimately derives from a Persian source. ("Turandot" is, in fact, a Persian word and means "the daughter of Turan.") So what role does that provenance play in finding cultural truth in this complex tale? And then there is the "Tartar" (central Asian) identity of three of the main characters. In fact, the story as we know it contains an even more complex ecumenism. The direct source is a play by the 18th-century Venetian Carlo Gozzi, who, we note with more than passing interest, was celebrated for writing "fantasy" plays in opposition to his rival Goldoni who championed theatrical realism. In Gozzi's play, characters from the Italian *commedia dell'arte* tradition wander into China and attain positions in the court, as their historical Venetian predecessor Marco Polo claimed to have done. These absurd characters become the opera's Ping, Pang, and Pong, whose very names prick our ears to possibilities of racist reductions. But their comic relief (depicted in syncopated rhythms, an Italian tradition in comic music) tells us that the clowns of the story are Italian—or at least as Italian as anyone is anything in this world. "If we look at this as a Chinese story, we're going to have to send it back for major rewrites," Tan says bluntly.

Casting the roles in *Turandot* along ethnic lines—even if it were possible—is not a solution in itself. Hwang believes we need a bigger vision of inclusion throughout the opera world and beyond. "We want to see casts that reflect the population of our country," Hwang says. "It involves larger issues of training artists and



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CORY WEAVER

employment opportunities. You can't just deal with these issues at the level of a major opera company. ... You have to open [the] training of singers to diverse populations from an early age and in every place. I think there's some work going into making this a future reality, and we all have to commit to this."

Speaking of the future, Tan points out how the role of time affects our perception of cultural conflicts. "In a hundred years, we will see these things differently," she says. "The landscape shifts beneath the issues and changes the meaning of our actions." Casting *Turandot* or *The Bonesetter's Daughter* would be a different issue because we will be different people. "If the United States is more involved and integrated with China, economically and culturally—which seems likely—then ethnicity itself would play out in a different way," says Tan. Exoticism was defined differently when *Turandot* premiered in 1926 than it is today, and will be still something else in the future. The opera world will need to keep asking difficult questions to keep up with this changing landscape. 🌟

Will Berger is the author of the books *Puccini Without Excuses*, *Wagner Without Fear*, and *Verdi With a Vengeance*.

ASIAN INSPIRATIONS

By the time *Turandot* was composed in 1924, the West's fascination with Asia, which could be traced back many centuries, had waxed and waned in several phases. In the 18th century, the taste for chinoiserie had brought supposed East Asian characters and characteristics to everything from highboys to garden pagodas, and above all to porcelain. More than a century later, Gilbert and Sullivan could still parody the fashion for "gentlemen of Japan" appearing "on vase and jar, on screen and fan, on many, many, many, many, many, many, many, many, a jar."

Another fashion was for *turquerie*, bringing Ottoman—or rather "Ottoman"—motifs to décor and dress (as when ladies wrapped their heads in silk turbans). "Turkish" characters turn up in operas by Mozart and Rossini, and we hear snatches of what was thought to be Turkish music in the works of composers from Lully to Beethoven and beyond. The fact that an Ottoman instrument introduced to Europe for marching bands, a long pole with a variety of little bells and jingles, could be called both a "Turkish crescent" and a "chapeau chinois" suggests that precision as to culture was not required.

The 19th century saw manifestations such as *orientalisme*, a genre of painting that occupied itself not with East Asia but with Syria, Turkey, and North Africa, and the interest in Buddhism (in a rather abstract form) that rippled from the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer to artists and intellectuals like Richard Wagner. Then there was *japonisme* in painting, fashion, graphic design, and interior decoration, and the impact of Japanese woodblock prints on artists from Whistler to Van Gogh. Many Symbolist artists, such as Gustave Moreau and Odilon Redon, depicted idyllic or frightening dream worlds through which Chinese, Indian, or Cambodian motifs and mythological figures hovered or skulked.

What drove these Western composers and artists to borrow, steal, adapt, or parody a huge range of forms and ideas from Asia? Generalizations are unlikely to be accurate or helpful; specifics are the key. Britain or Italy? India or China? 1720 or 1920? What patron, what audience, what purpose, what social/economic/sexual/class context?

Did some Western artists implicitly support imperialism, exploitation, and the *mission civilisatrice*? Did some pick up whatever shiny exotic device would appeal to audiences and sell books, tickets, paintings? Did some mix into their visions of Asian Neverlands undertones of ethnic conflict, sexual violence, or degradation (or confining idealization) of women? Were some sincere in their interest and esteem, finding new inspiration and even new hope? Yes to all. And then, looking through the window from the other side, there is the matter of Asian musicians' and artists' long engagement with the cultures of the West....

Forrest McGill is the Wattis Senior Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art at the Asian Art Museum.

An unidentified Javanese dancer from the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris.



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Designing TURANDOT



CORY WEAVER

*Editor's note: San Francisco audiences were introduced to David Hockney's stage work with Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, first seen here in 1982. His striking designs for Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, created for the 1978 Glyndebourne Festival, were seen on an American stage for the first time at San Francisco Opera in 1987. The British-born artist's creations for *Turandot* debuted in San Francisco in 1993, and restaged in 1998, 2002, and 2011. The Company also produced his staging of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* in 2006.*

*It is said that Hockney's stage designs were a way for the artist to experiment further with perspective. He researched Chinese scroll paintings which exploded conventional Western theories—the lines converging toward the viewer rather than away. Sometimes described as "reverse perspective," this innovation permitted Hockney to represent space in fresh and creative ways, as seen with *Turandot*.*

*This short essay is excerpted from Hockney's 1993 book *That's the Way I See It* (Chronicle Books). It is still timely and provides a fascinating glimpse into the artist's creative process.*



CORY WEAVER

San Francisco Opera had taken both of my productions that had originated in Glyndebourne and then gone to La Scala, Milan: *The Rake's Progress* and *The Magic Flute*. They had bought those sets and produced those operas in San Francisco and I had helped. So I felt a sense of loyalty. They then said they would love to have an original work made for them and suggested *Turandot*. Then it turned out it would be a joint production with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, opening in Chicago.

Turandot was the only Puccini opera I would do because it is not *verismo*, there is some fantasy in it, it takes place in mythical China. I had seen many productions, most of them kitsch beyond belief, overdone chinoiserie and too many dragons.... When San Francisco Opera asked me, I thought, I've never done an Italian opera—I'd done eight other operas by then—but I would not do it

alone because it is an enormous job. Ian Falconer, Richard Schmidt, and I got to work, with Richard setting up the model and doing all the technical work with the lights, while aesthetic decisions were made by Ian and myself. Ian and I designed it together because, for one thing, there are 200 costumes in *Turandot* and I wanted him to do them. Straight away I chose the colors, which are predominantly red—the color of the walls of the Forbidden City in Peking. I was inspired by the Chinese red I had seen on my travels in China in 1981.

I also specifically said that we wanted to do away with the excessive 19th-century Chinese look, the Victorian look, and use the drama and the music and make forms. It was clear to me—in the first scene in Peking—that *Turandot* was about cruel China, about harsh, sharp edges, axes, not about soft things, certainly

Self Portrait with Red Braces (2003), Watercolor on paper
24 x 18 1/8" ©David Hockney / Photo by Richard Schmidt



GETTY MUSEUM

Happy Birthday, David Hockney!

On July 9, Britain's most famous living artist turned 80 years old. To honor the occasion, art institutions around the world have been exhibiting his prolific, eclectic work.

Chief among these displays is the massive retrospective that opened last February at the Tate Britain in London. Even more extensive than the de Young's Hockney show from four years ago, the new retrospective surveys over 160 of the artist's paintings, drawings, prints, photography, and digital images from his school days in Bradford, England up to this year, created at his Santa Monica home. Along with Hockney's well-known "Swimming Pool" and "Grand Canyon" series and Yorkshire landscapes, the comprehensive display includes never-before-seen pieces. On view now at Paris' Pompidou Centre through the end of October, the retrospective travels in November to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art where it will remain through the end of February.

Closer to the Bay Area is an exhibition of Hockney self-portraits at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Dating from the 1950s through 2012, the works reveal the artist's versatility and playfulness: a lithograph of a teenage Hockney sporting a bowl cut and unflinching smirk to an iPad drawing completed at age 75 with cigarette in mouth and piercing blue eyes. The exhibition—which includes a companion display of Hockney's photo composites from the 1980s—is on view through November 26.

Hockney fans can also delight in a new sumo monograph. True to its name, *A Bigger Book* (Taschen) totals 77 pounds and 500 pages and includes reproductions of more than 450 of Hockney's works, including his stage designs. "Love life" is one of the artist's favorite mottos, and it comes across in every one of the book's pages.

not the China of *Le Rossignol*. That was my main theme at the beginning as well as the red walls. So we began to make harsh edges, strong diagonals, using mad perspectives. We made little models first, just as notes, and then carefully made the big models. For the first scene, the city of Peking, I suggested that we take the dragons away and put them into the roofs, in forms that felt like dragons, without specifically looking like them, thus evoking the grotesqueness of the city. We used lighting right from the start, keeping in mind how the costumes should look, since Chinese costumes are elaborate.

Turandot is an opera with a large chorus on the stage for a lot of the time and you have to take into account how they come on, get off, and how other characters play against them. We worked it out slowly: when we got the red walls, I suggested that the chorus, the people of Peking, the *popolo*, should be dressed in black against them. Ian did a superb job and of course we found marvelous reference books covering 2,000 years of Chinese costume—a very rich area to explore. Even though the costumes were not in the end elaborate—they were bold abstractions of Chinese costumes—they were marvelous.

David Hockney on the set of San Francisco Opera's 1993 production of *Turandot*

DAN REST

Below: Hockney's poster that accompanied the '93 run (original dimensions of 24 x 39 1/2").



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ARTIST PROFILES



NICOLA LUISOTTI
(Viareggio, Italy)

Conductor

Maestro Luisotti has been music director of San Francisco Opera since 2009 and has conducted over 40 operas and concerts since his Company debut in 2005. Luisotti, who holds the Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair, recently conducted the Company's *Rigoletto*, *Aida*, *Andrea Chénier*, and *Don Carlo*. Last season, he led *Pagliacci* at Teatro Regio di Torino, *La Traviata* at the Metropolitan Opera, as well as conducting the Metropolitan Opera National Council Grand Finals Concert. Other recent engagements include a symphonic concert at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, *Rigoletto* at Madrid's Teatro Real and Milan's Teatro alla Scala, *Il Trittico* and *La Traviata* at London's Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and *Rigoletto* at Paris' Opéra Bastille. In addition, Luisotti has received international acclaim from press and public alike with performances at Vienna State Opera, Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice, Venice's La Fenice, Bologna's Teatro Comunale, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Dresden, Hamburg, Valencia, Los Angeles Opera, Seattle Opera, and Tokyo's Suntory Hall. He was recently appointed associate director at Madrid's Teatro Real. Luisotti begins San Francisco Opera's 95th season with *Turandot*, the annual San Francisco Opera in the Park Concert, and *La Traviata*. Also in the 2017-18 season, he returns to the Metropolitan Opera to lead performances of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, as well as a new production of *Aida* at Madrid's Teatro Real, a concert with Teatro Regio di Torino, and *La Bohème* and *Falstaff* for London's Royal Opera, Covent Garden. In December, Luisotti will conduct the Richard Tucker Music Foundation Gala at Carnegie Hall.



MARTINA SERAFIN
(Vienna, Austria)

Turandot

Soprano Martina Serafin made her San Francisco Opera debut as the Marshallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* in 2007. Born in Vienna, she studied at the Vienna Conservatory and between 1995 and 2000 she was a member of the ensemble at Graz Opera. Guest appearances soon led her to the

world's premier opera stages, including at the Vienna State Opera where she has been a regular performer since 2005. Serafin's repertoire includes the roles of Lisa in *Pique Dame*, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, the title role of *Manon Lescaut*, Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*, and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. Recent engagements included Elsa von Brabant in *Lohengrin* at the Opéra National de Paris and Tosca at the Vienna State Opera. Later this season, she performs Turandot at the Metropolitan Opera and Zurich Opera House, Abigaille in *Nabucco* at Milan's Teatro alla Scala, and Tosca at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.



BRIAN JAGDE
(New York, New York)
Calaf

Tenor Brian Jagde made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2010 as Joe in *La Fanciulla del West* and most recently

returned to the Company as Radames in *Aida*, Don José in *Carmen*, Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. Last season, Jagde made role debuts as Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and Froh in *Das Rheingold* in his first appearance with the New York Philharmonic. He also performed as Pinkerton in a house debut at Washington National Opera, and he sang for the first time at Madrid's Teatro Real as Macduff in *Macbeth* and at Oper Stuttgart as Cavaradossi. Upcoming engagements include Cavaradossi at the Zurich Opera House, Verdi's Requiem at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Der Fremde in Korngold's *Das Wunder der Heliane* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Radames at Seattle Opera. Jagde is a graduate of the 2009 Merola Opera Program and former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow.



TONI MARIE PALMERTREE
(Fleetwood, Pennsylvania)
Liù

Soprano Toni Marie Palmertree made her San Francisco Opera debut as A Heavenly Voice in 2016's production of *Don Carlo* and most recently appeared as

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Cio-Cio-San in the Company's *Madama Butterfly*, a Priestess in *Aida*, Flower/Lady-in-Waiting in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and Barena in *Jenůfa*. A second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and a participant of the 2015 Merola Opera Program, Palmertree also starred in West Bay Opera's 2017 production of *Il Trittico*, portraying Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro* and the title role of *Suor Angelica*. Awards include the Metropolitan Opera National Council District Awards (Pittsburgh), as well as finalist in the National Opera Association Voice Competition, the Classical Singer Voice Competition, and the International Moniuszko Voice Competition in Warsaw, Poland. Palmertree took first place in the Long Leaf Opera of North Carolina Voice Competition, the Kennett Square Symphony Voice Competition, and the Marcella Sembrich competition. She received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Peabody Conservatory of Music.



RAYMOND ACETO
(Cleveland, Ohio)

Timur

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

Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, Ramfis in *Aida*, Hunding in *Die Walküre*, Reverend Olin Blich in *Susannah*, Banquo in *Macbeth*, and the King of Egypt in *Aida*, among other roles. Last season saw Aceto return to New Orleans Opera as Méphistophélès in *Faust*. Other recent performances include Scarpia in *Tosca* with the Dallas Opera, his Opera Australia debut as Walter in *Luisa Miller*, Hunding at Washington National Opera, performances of Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied* with Jaap van Zweden and the Dallas Symphony, and the roles of Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette* and Ashby in *La Fanciulla del West* at the Santa Fe Opera. Aceto is also in demand as a concert artist, including recent appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra under the baton of Franz Welser-Möst in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Verdi Requiem, and with the San Francisco Symphony in Mahler's Eighth Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. During the 2017–18 season, Aceto performs in a European tour with the Cleveland Orchestra as Harastha in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, the Verdi Requiem with the Oregon Symphony, and as Hunding and Fafner in San Francisco Opera's *Ring* cycle.



JOO WON KANG
(Seoul, South Korea)
Ping

Baritone Joo Won Kang made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2012 as the Second Priest in *The Magic Flute*. Recent

performance highlights include his debut at the Wexford Festival, Ireland where he sang the leading role of Corrado in Donizetti's *Maria de Rudenz*; Chou En-lai in John Adams' *Nixon in China* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Germont in *La Traviata* with Opera Maine; the title role of *Eugene Onegin* with North Carolina Opera; and Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Fort Worth Opera. Additional upcoming debuts include Arizona Opera and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Kang has been a top prize winner in many important vocal competitions including First Prize Winner in the Gerda Lissner International Competition, Opera Index Vocal Competition, Giulio Gari International Competition, and Palm Beach International Competition. His San Francisco Opera performance as Captain Gardiner in Jake Heggie's *Moby-Dick* was televised nationally on PBS and released on DVD. Kang is a former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and 2011 Merola Opera Program graduate.



JULIUS AHN
(Seoul, South Korea)
Pang

Korean-American tenor Julius Ahn made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2014 as Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, a role that

he reprised with the Company in 2016. Pang has become another one of his signature parts, which he has performed with Seattle Opera, Utah Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Cincinnati Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Pittsburgh Opera, and Atlanta Opera. Later this season, he will reprise the role at Vancouver Opera and Tulsa Opera. The 2017-18 season also includes his role debut as Bardolfo in *Falstaff* with Opera Omaha. Notable past engagements include various roles in *The Nose* with the Metropolitan Opera and Opera Boston; Tanzmeister and Brighella in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Boston Lyric Opera; Sellem in *The Rake's Progress* with the Princeton Festival; and Monostatos in

The Magic Flute with Opera Carolina and Opera Omaha.



JOEL SORENSEN
(Canton, Ohio)
Pong

A frequent performer with San Francisco Opera, tenor Joel Sorensen made his Company debut in 2004 as the

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



BRAD WALKER
(Lake Zurich, Illinois)
A Mandarin

Bass-baritone Brad Walker is a second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and graduate of the 2015 Merola Opera

Program. His most recent performances with the Company were as Schaunard in last summer's *La Bohème*. Prior to making his San Francisco Opera debut in 2016 as Zuniga in *Carmen*, he appeared in the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, and Colline in *La Bohème* with Yale Opera where he received an Artist Diploma from the Yale School of Music. While earning a Master of Music degree from the University of Kansas, he appeared as Mr. Peachum in *The Beggar's Opera*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, and Orgon in

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Tartuffe. He has been an apprentice with Des Moines Metro Opera, Chautauqua Opera Company, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and received an award in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Walker appeared last season as Dumas in the Company's *Andrea Chénier* and as a Stagehand in *The Makropulos Case*.



ROBERT BRUBAKER
(Manheim, Pennsylvania)

Emperor Altoum

Making his San Francisco Opera debut as Emperor Altoum in *Turandot*, tenor Robert Brubaker

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. This season he also appears with the Company as Aegisth in *Elektra* and Guillot de Morfontaine in *Manon*, followed by Herod at Teatro Regio Torino.



KATHLEEN BAYLER
(Hampshire, Illinois)

First Handmaiden

Soprano Kathleen Bayler has been a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus since 1996 and has performed solo

roles in productions of *Louise*, *La Rondine*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Show Boat*, and *Sweeney Todd*. She received her Bachelor of Music degree from Northern Illinois University.



VIRGINIA PLUTH

(San Leandro, California)

Second Handmaiden

As a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus for 29 seasons, soprano Virginia Pluth has sung various roles

with the Company, including First Priestess in *Iphigénie en Tauride*, the Shepherdess in *Jenůfa*; Sarah in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, and Sister Catherine in *Dead Man Walking*. As a soloist, her recent concert work includes the *Wesendonck Lieder* with Symphony Parnassus, Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with the Rimsky-Korsakov String Quartet, and Haydn's *Creation* at the Sun Valley Music Festival.



STEPHEN CANNON

(New Lexington, Ohio)

Prince of Persia

New to the San Francisco Opera Chorus and the Bay Area, tenor Stephen Cannon performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago

for nine seasons and 24 productions as a member of the chorus and soloist. Highlights include roles in productions of *Il Trovatore* and *Manon* and singing at the 2007 Lyric Opera Stars of the Season concert in Chicago's Millennium Park.



GARNETT BRUCE

(Washington, D.C.)

Director

Garnett Bruce's body of work includes directing at Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, and his

European opera debut staging *Turandot* for the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples. From 2008 to 2011 he was the artistic adviser and principal stage director for Opera Omaha, where he led a cycle of the Mozart-Da Ponte operas. He began directing for the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University in 2004, receiving a faculty appointment in 2006. He has been on staff at the Aspen Music Festival and School since 1993 and on the faculty there since 1997. His award-winning production of *La Cenerentola* for Kansas City has traveled to Austin, Orlando, and Madison. Known especially for his large-scale work of the standard repertoire, he has created stagings of *Turandot*, *Carmen*, *Tosca*, *Aida*, *Pagliacci*,

and *La Bohème* that have been seen coast to coast.



DAVID HOCKNEY

(Bradford, England)

Production

San Francisco audiences were introduced to David Hockney's stage work with *The Rake's Progress*, seen here in

1982, 1988, and 2000. His striking designs for *Die Zauberflöte*, created for the 1978 Glyndebourne Festival, were seen on an American stage for the first time at San Francisco Opera in 1987 and reprised here in 1991, 2000, and 2003. The British-born artist's creations for *Turandot* were first seen here in 1993, and restaged in 1998, 2002, and 2011. Most recently, the Company produced his *Tristan und Isolde* in 2006. Hockney's career began in 1963 with his first solo exhibition in London. In 1966, he began designing for the stage when he created sets and costumes for London's Royal Court Theatre. The internationally-celebrated artist has designed sets and costumes for productions of ballets and operas such as *Parade*, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, *Le Sacré du Printemps*, *Le Rossignol*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* for companies including Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the Metropolitan Opera; Lyric Opera of Chicago; and Los Angeles Opera. His vast body of work also includes print designs for magazines, books, films, videos, and several celebrated series of etchings. Equally praised are his works resulting from a fascination with photocopy and fax machines, still video cameras, computer-generated images, and, most recently, the iPhone and iPad.



IAN FALCONER

(Ridgefield, Connecticut)

Costume Designer

American author, illustrator, costume, and set designer Ian Falconer has had a varied career spanning

the worlds of publishing, opera, ballet, and fine arts. His stage collaborations with David Hockney also include *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Falconer designed the sets for the Atlantic Theater's production of *The Santaland Diaries*, written by David Sedaris. He has also created scenery and costumes for Pacific Northwest Ballet,

New York City Ballet, and Boston Ballet. In addition to his stage work, Falconer has created numerous covers for the *New Yorker* magazine and designed floats for the new Main Street Parade at Disneyland. He is the author and illustrator of the *Olivia* series, a group of critically-acclaimed and *New York Times* best-selling children's books.



THOMAS J. MUNN
(Plainville, Connecticut)
Original Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn served as lighting director and designer for San Francisco Opera from 1976 through

2002, creating designs and special effects for over 190 productions, including the Emmy-nominated, televised world premiere of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and his Emmy Award-winning work on *La Gioconda*. His designs have also been seen at Turin's Teatro Regio, Los Angeles Opera, San Diego Opera, the Dallas Opera, and on Broadway. Munn is a professor emeritus of theatre and dance at UC Davis and is the lighting designer for the San Francisco Playhouse's upcoming production of *A Christmas Carol*.



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 *Don Giovanni*, *Rigoletto*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Carmen*, *Don Carlo*, and *Jenůfa*. 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. Later this fall, his designs appear in the Company's *La Traviata* and *Manon*.



IAN ROBERTSON
(Dundee, Scotland)
Chorus Director

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

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



LAWRENCE PECH
(San Francisco, California)
Choreographer

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.

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DAVE MAIER

(Great Neck, New York)

Fight Director

Resident fight director for San Francisco Opera, Dave Maier made his Company debut in 2013 with *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*.

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

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Eric Dew
George Gardner
Jonathan Garzoli
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Kathleen Guiang
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Andrew Korniej
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Helen Lew
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Larry Severino
Carlos Suarez
Kay Thornton
Mimi Timberlake
Jim Troup
Miles Walls
Yasmin Yamat
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Candice Yung
Paul Zemlin
Frank Zepeda

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Taline Baghdassarian
Zoe Brunsdon
Zora Day-Friedland
Dominic DeQuattro
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Adea Hansen-Whistler
Henry Hoffman
John Holtz
Rebecca Jia
Allegra Kelly
Timur Kotelnikov
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† Leave of absence

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Concertmaster



Laura Albers
Associate Concertmaster



Heidi Wilcox
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Jennifer Cho
First Violin



Dawn Harms
First Violin



Mariya Borozina
First Violin



Barbara Riccardi
First Violin



Leonid Igudesman
First Violin



Asuka Annie Yano
First Violin



Jeremy Preston
Principal
Second Violin



Martha Simonds
Associate Principal
Second Violin



Beni Shinohara
Assistant Principal
Second Violin



Eva Karasik
Second Violin



Leslie Ludena
Second Violin



Linda Deutsch
Second Violin



Craig Reiss
Second Violin



Carla Maria Rodrigues
Principal
Viola



Sergey Rakitchenkov
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Viola



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Viola



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Viola



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Cello



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Joseph Lescher
Principal
Bass



Jonathan Lancelle
Associate Principal
Bass



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Assistant Principal
Bass



Shinji Eshima
Bass



Mark Drury
Bass

SAN FRANCISCO ORCHESTRA CONTINUED



Julie McKenzie
Principal
Flute



Patricia Farrell
Flute



Stephanie McNab
Flute & Piccolo



Mingjia Liu
Principal
Oboe



Deborah Henry
Assistant Principal
Oboe



Janet Popesco
Archibald
Oboe & English Horn



Deborah Shidler
Oboe
Regular Substitute



Jose Gonzalez
Granero
Principal Clarinet



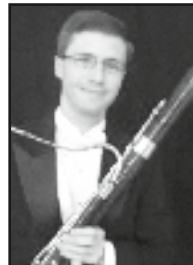
Joanne Burke Eisler
Assistant Principal
Clarinet



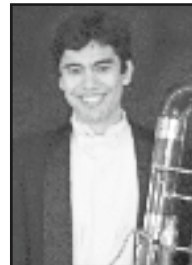
Anthony Striplen
Clarinet &
Bass Clarinet



Rufus Olivier
Principal
Bassoon



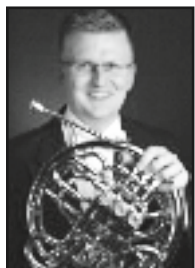
Daniel MacNeill
Bassoon



Michael Severance
Bassoon &
Contrabassoon



Kevin Rivard
Co-Principal
Horn



Mark Almond
Co-Principal
Horn



Keith Green
Horn



Brian McCarty
Horn



Lawrence Ragent
Horn



William Klingelhoffer
Horn
Regular Substitute



Adam Luftman
Principal
Trumpet



William Holmes
Trumpet



John Pearson
Trumpet



Scott Macomber
Trumpet
Regular Substitute



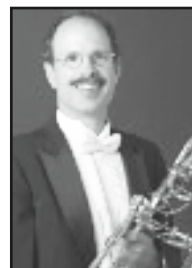
Samuel Schlosser
Principal Trombone



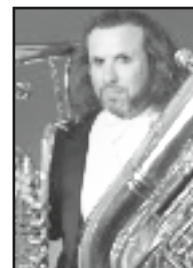
Jeffrey Budin
Principal Trombone
Regular Substitute



Donald Kennelly
Trombone



David Ridge
Trombone &
Bass Trombone



Zachariah Spellman
Tuba/Cimbasso



John Burgardt
Timpani



Richard Kvistad
Principal Percussion &
Associate Timpani



Patricia Niemi
Percussion



Olga Ortenberg
Rakitchenkov
Harp



Tracy Davis
Orchestra Manager



Carrie Weick
Librarian



Timothy Spears
Assistant Orchestra
Manager & Librarian

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

REGULAR CHORUS



Kathleen Bayler
Soprano



Sara Colburn
Soprano



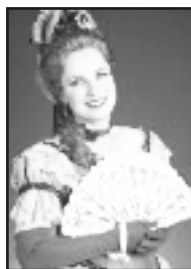
Dvora Djoraev
Soprano



Mary Finch
Soprano



Claire Kelm
Soprano



Elisabeth Rom Lucio
Soprano



Angela Eden Moser
Soprano



Rachelle Perry
Soprano



Virginia Pluth
Soprano



Carole Schaffer
Soprano



Mitzie Kay Weiner
Soprano



Buffy Baggott
Mezzo-Soprano



Roberta Bowman
Mezzo-Soprano



Janet Campbell
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Mouzon
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Munro
Mezzo-Soprano



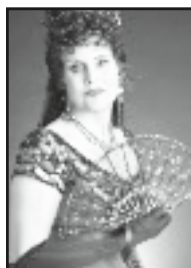
Erin Neff
Mezzo-Soprano



Laurel Porter
Mezzo-Soprano



Laurel Rice
Mezzo-Soprano



Shelley Seitz
Mezzo-Soprano



Claudia Siefer
Mezzo-Soprano



Donna Turchi
Mezzo-Soprano



C. Michael Belle
Tenor



Alan Cochran
Tenor



Chris Corley
Tenor



Daniel Harper
Tenor



Christopher Jackson
Tenor



Michael Jankosky
Tenor



Phillip Pickens
Tenor



Chester Pidduck
Tenor



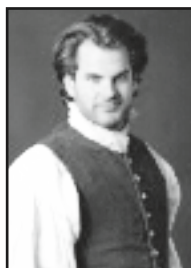
Colby Roberts
Tenor



Sigmund Seigel
Tenor



Dan Stanley
Tenor



Andrew Truett
Tenor



Richard Walker
Tenor

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA REGULAR CHORUS CONTINUED



Torlef Borsting
Baritone



Anders Fröhlich
Baritone



Cameron Henley
Baritone



Ken Johnson
Baritone



David Kekuewa
Baritone



Frederick Matthews
Baritone



Ken Rafanan
Baritone
Leave of Absence



Jere Torkelsen
Baritone



Christopher Filipowicz
Bass



Bojan Knežević
Bass



William O'Neill
Bass



William Pickersgill
Bass



Valery Portnov
Bass

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

CORPS DANCERS



Brook Broughton



Blanche Hampton



Bryan Ketron



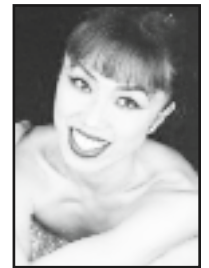
Michael Levine



Rachel Speidel Little



Jekyns Pelaez



Chiharu Shibata



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When they consider how long they’ve been patrons of the Opera, Randy and David decided that joining the Bel Canto Legacy Society was the next important step. “As a third generation San Franciscan, I treasure our cultural institutions and wish to see S.F. Opera continue to grow,” Randy says. David adds, “I’m proud to know that our legacy gift will help keep the Opera vibrant for future generations. I can think of no better investment in the future.”

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Joyce Reitman
Venetta & John Rohal

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

*Deceased

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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.

Turandot: Robert Hartwell

Elektra: Bruce Lamott

La Traviata: Peter Susskind

Manon: Marcia Green

Girls of the Golden West: Clifford Cranna

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ERIC FRAZIER





INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND OPERA

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

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

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

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

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


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


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

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

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

Connect with Matthew via Twitter, Instagram, and email.

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