

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

MANON

BY GIACOMO PUCCINI









Vol. 97, No. 3 • 2019-20 Season • November 2019

Adam Snellings, Art Direction Susan L. Wells, Design Consultant

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FEATURES

36

THE MANY FACES AND VOICES OF MANON BY IRA SIFF From 1926 to the present, a host of leading sopranos have brought unique and unforgettable interpretations of the mercurial Manon Lescaut to San Francisco Opera.

40

LOVE ACTUALLY BY WILLIAM BERGER

Despite early struggles with the libretto and enormous pressure to be the next Verdi, Giacomo Puccini scored his first hit (and one of opera's greatest love scenes) in 1893 with *Manon Lescaut*.

encore 50 g November 2019 | Volume 15, No. 3

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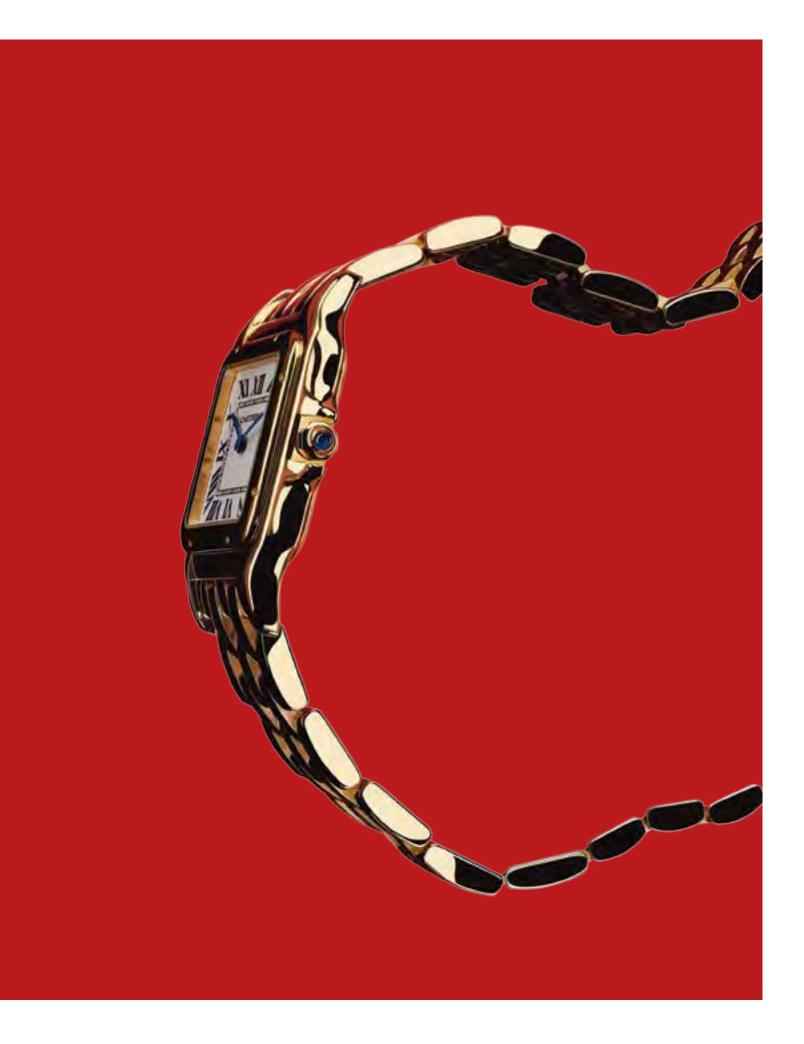
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2019–20 SEASON



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Н SE



BY ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK SUNG IN ENGLISH



JUN 12, 18, 21, 23, 27, 2020

BY GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDE

THE JUN 20, 24, 25, 28, 30; JUL 1, 3, 2020

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All performances feature English supertitles. All dates, prices, programs. artists, and productions subject to change. Tickets subject to availability. Photos: Romeo and Juliet, Alain Hanel; Billy Budd, Alastair Muir/Glyndebourne Productions Ltd.; Manon Lescaut, Terrence McCarthy; Ernani, Valerie Bromann/Lyric Opera of Chicago; Partenope, Cory Weaver; The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs, Norman Seeff.

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PRE-OPERA TALKS

Join us for a 25-minute overview of the opera, composer, and historical background. Talks begin 55 minutes prior to curtain on the Orchestra level. **sfopera.com/operatalks**

Manon Lescaut: Marcia Green

Hansel & Gretel: Peter Susskind

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A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Welcome to San Francisco Opera's 97th season! Whether you have been a subscriber for decades or are joining us for the very first time, you are an important member of our family. This is *your* company, and our mission is to share the transformative power of opera with you.

For the final performances of the fall season, we are proud to present *Manon Lescaut* by Giacomo Puccini and an exciting new production of Engelbert



DREW ALTIZER

Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, both emotionally resonant works that speak to themes of love, attachment to home, and childhood experience. We believe that these themes act as powerful reminders during the holiday season, and we are excited to share them with you.

We also look forward to presenting our outstanding San Francisco Opera Chorus, led by Chorus Director Ian Robertson in a special concert on November 22. We follow this with our annual *The Future Is Now* program with the acclaimed San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows in their final concert of the year at the Herbst Theatre on December 6. We encourage you to join us and delight in the artistry, dedication, and talent of our resident artists.

Reflecting on the remarkable productions this fall, including the triumphs of *Billy Budd* and *Romeo and Juliet* and our beautiful new Legacy Production of *The Marriage of Figaro*, we are incredibly grateful to our patrons and donors. These achievements would not be possible without your partnership. Ticket sales only cover a quarter of our expenses, so we rely on the support of our community to ensure this uniquely compelling art form thrives at the highest levels of excellence in the Bay Area. As we embark upon the holiday season of giving, we hope you will consider supporting San Francisco Opera with a year-end gift.

Thank you for joining us for the fall season, and we look forward to seeing you in the summer for *Partenope, Ernani,* and *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs.*

Sincerely,

Keith B. Geeslin President San Francisco Opera Association

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA NEWS



OPEN YOUR HEART & EARN YOUR WINGS This season, San Francisco Opera continues to build on the *Earn Your Wings* **campaign begun last year.** This initiative is an invitation to patrons to engage with and support the Company's community partners in meaningful and demonstrative ways. We are asking our audiences to consider what it means to be a "global citizen" who participates in and advocates to support the arts, even as we fight to address critical societal issues, like homelessness.

In Fall of 2018, San Francisco Opera partnered with Community Housing Partnership and Compass Family Services to instigate a new era of civic practice. Buoyed by a grant from OPERA America, San Francisco Opera engaged these flagship organizations in our community in a cross-sector partnership with the goal of redefining how an arts organization and a social service agency might collaborate. These efforts are about building community and working together in strategic ways to make the art of opera more accessible and the critical work of our community partners better known.

Community Housing Partnership's mission is to help people experiencing homelessness secure housing and become self-sufficient. To this end, they operate 17 facilities across the city of San Francisco, providing a wide array of supportive services. The staff of these facilities work tirelessly to interrupt the scourge of homelessness among both single adults and families. Founded in 1914, Compass Family Services is passionately engaged in helping homeless and at-risk families become stably housed, providing resources to support the emotional, physical, and economic health and well-being of families.

These agencies will have a distinct presence in the War Memorial Opera House during the presentation of San Francisco Opera's new production of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*. The opera is more than a children's fairy tale, it's an opportunity for community conversation and deliberation about how we might better address food insecurity and homelessness in our community. At the intersection of arts, culture, and community, there are new opportunities to learn from and support one another, no matter our context. The metaphoric wings referenced in the campaign can represent a growing consciousness around civic duty. What is civic duty, and how do we harness it? Or, perhaps a more pertinent question is, have you earned your wings yet?

Charles Chip Mc Neal

Director of Diversity, Equity, and Community



SASHA COOKE TO GIVE HOLOCAUST WORLD PREMIERE

Mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke, currently in the title role (along with Heidi Stober) in San Francisco Opera's *Hansel and Gretel*, will have a strong Bay Area presence for the first six months in 2020. In addition to bringing her critically acclaimed interpretation of Laurene Powell Jobs in the Mason Bates opera *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* and as Artist in Residence with the San Francisco Symphony, the American artist will be at the center of a dramatic new work by Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer drawn from the Holocaust.

Commissioned by Burlingame's Music at Kohl Mansion and director Patricia Kristof Moy, San Francisco Opera's French language coach for the past 40 years, Heggie's *Intonations: Songs from the Violins of Hope* will feature Cooke on January 18 and 19, along with awardwinning South African violinist Daniel Hope, and a string quartet comprised of musicians from the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

This new chamber work will be presented as part of an eight-week project featuring over 50 recovered and restored Holocaust-era string instruments, the Violins of Hope, in performance and exhibition. More than 41 Bay Area organizations are participating with eight weeks of concerts, exhibitions, film screenings, lectures, school programs, and community forums. Sasha Cooke's performances coincide with the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, one of the many camps where Jewish musicians were forced to play in orchestras or individually on their violins while bearing witness to unspeakable atrocities.

"This is a world premiere unlike others that I've performed given the historical context," offered Cooke. "While it is shameful how these instruments were used in the camps, it is my hope that I can give voice to the heroic stories of these musicians and that this new work will serve as a musical bridge of compassion and grace." Though we cannot change the past, we can, through works like these, change our relationship to these events. **Violinsofhopesfba.org**.

YOUR OPERA EXPERIENCE

PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

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

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

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

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

ACCESSIBILITY San Francisco Opera is committed to providing easy access for all of our patrons. Please contact the Opera Box Office prior to your visit so that we can ensure your comfort. For Patrons in Wheelchairs, San Francisco Opera offers wheelchair-accessible seats at a range of prices. All entrances at the War Memorial Opera House are wheelchair accessible. Wheelchairaccessible stalls in restrooms can be found on all floors (except the Main Lobby and 5th floor Balcony levels). Accessible drinking fountains are located on all floors except the Balcony level.

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

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

DINING & REFRESHMENTS Global Gourmet operates pre-show and intermission food and beverage concession services in lobby areas. Beginning two hours prior to all performances, Prelude at the Opera House in the lower lounge offers a changing seasonal buffet, as well as elevated à *la carte* dishes for pre-performance dining and intermission. The North Box Restaurant on the North Mezzanine (Box) level features locally sourced California cuisine with global influences.

Audiences may enjoy purchased beverages inside the auditorium in the appropriate containers. Outside food and drink are prohibited.

The **SAN FRANCISCO OPERA SHOP**, located in the South Mezzanine lobby, front lobby, and North Dress Circle of the Opera House, sells opera CDs, DVDs, SF Opera merchandise, and gift items. The Shop is open 90 minutes before performances, at intermissions, and afterward. All proceeds benefit San Francisco Opera. **COAT CHECK** A coat check for your convenience is located at the North and South ends of the main lobby. For the safety and comfort of our audience, large bags are strongly discouraged and are subject to search.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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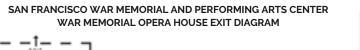
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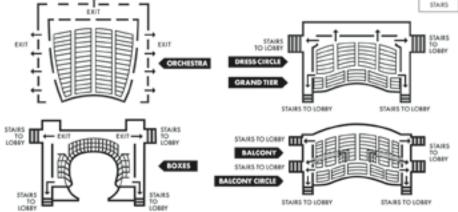
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JOHN A. & CYNTHIA FRY GUNN



TERRENCE MCCARTHY

nce again, the unprecedented generosity of Cynthia and John Gunn has set the stage for a dazzling season at San Francisco Opera. Since 2002, when John joined the Opera Board, the couple has underwritten numerous productions and provided exceptional support for many of the Company's innovative endeavors. In September 2008, the Gunns made a historic commitment-believed to be the largest gift ever made by individuals to an American opera company-to help fund the signature projects of General Director David Gockley, including new operas and productions, multimedia projects, and outreach programs, and they have proudly continued that support for General Director Matthew Shilvock. This season, the Gunns' inspired generosity is helping make possible five productions-Romeo & Juliet, Billy Budd, The Marriage of Figaro, Manon Lescaut, and The (R)evolution of Steve Fobs. The Gunns hope that their support inspires others to give. John comments, "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 Cvnthia, 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 chairs the advisory board for the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, is Vice Chairman of the Board of Stanford Hospital Care, and is a former trustee of Stanford University. Cynthia currently serves as an overseer of Stanford's Hoover Institution and a trustee of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and has been a member of the advisory board of Family and Children Services and the board of the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health. 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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Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for New Productions (Production Sponsor, Hansel & Gretel)

San Francisco Opera will always owe a debt of gratitude to Phyllis C. Wattis for her many generous and visionary gifts to San Francisco Opera that include an endowment that established the Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for New Productions. This season's *Hansel & Gretel* is made possible by the sponsorship support of the Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for New Productions.

Phyllis C. Wattis passed away in June 2002 at the age of 97. During her life she generously supported many Bay Area nonprofit organizations engaged in health care (California Pacific Medical Center, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital), education (University of California, Stanford University), displays of scientific wonders (Academy of Sciences, Exploratorium), and production of music (Conservatory of Music, San Francisco Symphony). She was

especially interested in the arts, contributing also her time, wisdom, and leadership to fine arts and performing arts. She served prominently on the boards of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco Opera, and San Francisco Symphony and was a committed financial and ideological supporter of each of these organizations as well. Her vision was instrumental in shaping the arts community in San Francisco.

Phyllis C. Wattis helped underwrite San Francisco Opera's world premiere productions, including *Dangerous Liaisons* (1994), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1998), and the critically acclaimed *Dead Man Walking* (2000). She provided additional support to many other productions including a new production of *War and Peace* (1991), *Lulu* (1998), *Wozzeck* (1999), and *Kat'a Kabanova* (2002).

San Francisco Opera deeply appreciates the many generous gifts from Phyllis C. Wattis and takes this opportunity to recognize the Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for New Productions for its exclusive sponsorship support of *The Makropulos Case* (2010), *The Flying Dutchman* (2013), *Two Women* (2015), and sponsorship of this season's *The Marriage of Figaro, Hansel & Gretel*, and *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*.

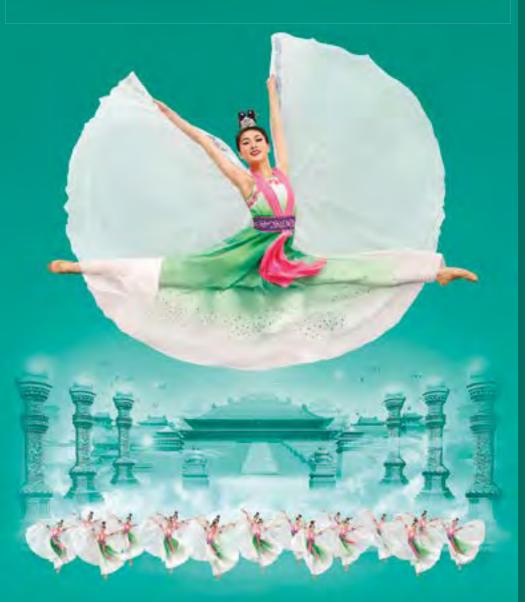


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KRISTEN LOKEN

Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson Fund (Production Sponsor, Manon Lescaut) Libby and Burgess Jamieson have made an extraordinary commitment to San Francisco Opera for over three decades by supporting traditional, classical productions. Their ongoing generosity 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*. They consider their sustained support of the arts, especially of San Francisco Opera, as a means of preserving important cultural links for future generations. "Libby and I believe in the enduring love of great works appealing to seasoned and new audiences alike and to attract the next

generation of opera lovers," Burgess says, and "we are so pleased to play a role in bringing *Manon Lescaut* to the stage. We have a special fondness for supporting Puccini operas and look forward to this grand production, especially as it features the return of former music director Nicola Luisotti to conduct such outstanding artists as Lianna Haroutounian and Brian Jagde." 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.

Gretchen Kimball (Production Sponsor, Opera in the Park)



A native of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Gretchen Kimball grew up attending the symphony, but did not see her first opera until she saw *Aida* at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, on a college tour. After moving to San Francisco, she started attending the opera with a friend, but it was experiencing 'arias al fresco' at Opera in the Park for the first time in 2004 that inspired her to become a sponsor of this free annual event in 2005, and every year since, through the William and Gretchen Kimball Fund.

Gretchen has been a dedicated San Francisco Opera subscriber and supporter for many years and loves hearing from people of all walks of life about how much they enjoy Opera in the Park, the culminating event of the Company's annual opening weekend festivities. The concert attracts thousands of new and experienced operagoers alike to Golden Gate Park to experience the power

of opera in a picnic setting. As Joshua Kosman of the *San Francisco Chronicle* described the 2019 Opera in the Park, "the art form could hardly have put a better face forward. As the sun beat down on thousands of attendees splayed across the meadow... the park filled with the kind of musical delights that don't always arrive in such beguiling surroundings."

A tireless volunteer and champion of the arts, Gretchen and her late husband William Kimball's philanthropic commitment to education and public programs has been instrumental in growing audiences for our Bay Area arts and cultural institutions, including the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco Symphony, and Young Audiences of Northern California. Her advocacy for San Francisco Opera also includes support from the Kimball Foundation of our award-winning ARIA programs in Bay Area public schools.



DREW ALTIZER

Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund (Production Sponsor, Manon Lescaut) *Manon Lescaut* is the 25th production supported by the Littlefield Family. Company Sponsors since 2002, the Littlefield name became especially familiar to opera fans in 2006 when Jeannik made her historic \$35 million commitment to San Francisco Opera. She held a subscription for over 40 years until her passing in 2013. Jeannik's daughter, Denise, continues her family's wonderful legacy of support, most recently as a generous benefactor of Opera Ball 2019 and by underwriting the LED lighting effects for SFO's production of the *Ring* in 2018. The Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Endowment Fund provides a permanent and unrestricted source of income for the Company.



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RAY "SCOTTY" MORRIS

Bernard and Barbro Osher (Production Sponsor, Manon Lescaut)

A native of Maine, Bernard Osher became involved with San Francisco Opera as a subscriber 50 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 scholarships for community college students in California and Maine and for baccalaureate students at universities in every state and the District of Columbia; Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes serving seasoned adults on 123 campuses nationwide; and Osher Centers for Integrative Medicine at six of the nation's leading medical schools 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 for California and serves as Chairman of the Board of the Osher Foundation.



DREW ALTIZER

Joan and David Traitel/Great Singers Fund (Sponsor, Brian Jagde and

Lianna Haroutounian in *Manon Lescaut*) "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. "We are thrilled to sponsor Brian Jagde and Lianna Haroutounian. 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."



Jeffrey Thomas, conductor

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JAN SHREM & MARIA MANETTI SHREM

s Jan Shrem explains, "For Maria, it is all about the artists. Though I had loved opera for years before I met her, it was Maria who opened my eyes to the dedication and sacrifice of the artists." Jan and Maria have provided significant support for opera artists through the establishment of four major funds. Through the Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund, they support many classic works of the Italian repertoire, including this season's Manon Lescaut and Ernani. Through the Conductors Fund, appearances of renowned conductors are assured at San Francisco Opera, this season for Romeo & Juliet, The Marriage of Figaro, and Manon Lescaut. Through the Emerging Stars Fund, Jan and Maria help bring some of opera's most exciting rising talents to the stage, with appearances this season in Romeo & Juliet, Billy Budd, The Marriage of Figaro, Manon Lescaut, Ernani, and Partenope. And finally, the Luminaries Concert Fund enables San Francisco Opera to bring legendary artists to the stage for special events and performances.

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

The Emerging Stars of San Francisco Opera's 2019 season include virtuoso singers Pene Pati and Amina Edris (*Romeo & Juliet*), John Chest (*Billy Budd*), Jeanine De Bique, Serena Malfi, Levente Molnár, and Michael Sumuel (*The Marriage of Figaro*), and Anthony Clark Evans (*Manon Lescaut*). What does it take to be an Emerging Star? In the Shrems' view: "a beautiful voice, a good ear, strong acting skills, and the ability to perform from the heart." Andriana Chuchman, who made her Company debut as Mary Hatch in Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life* last season, was named "2019 Emerging Star of the Year" based on a popular vote. General Director Matthew Shilvock observes, "Maria and Jan have an incredible sensitivity to the needs of artists and a passion for seeing



DREW ALTIZER

young artists succeed and grow into the next generation of stars. It is a pleasure to partner with them on the Emerging Stars program and to celebrate the finest voices making an impact on the world. San Francisco Opera has always been one of the great nurturers of new voices, and this program helps us take that even further."

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

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

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

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MANON

OPERA IN FOUR ACTS BY GIACOMO PUCCINI LIBRETTO BY RUGGERO LEONCAVALLO, MARCO PRAGA, GIUSEPPE GIACOSA, DOMENICO OLIVA, AND LUIGI ILLICA

BASED ON THE 1731 NOVEL L'HISTOIRE DU CHEVALIER DES GRIEUX ET DE MANON LESCAUT BY ABBÉ PRÉVOST

This production is made possible, in part, by John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn, Burgess & Elizabeth Jamieson, the Edmund W. & Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, and Bernard & Barbro Osher.

Anthony Clark Evans' appearance is made possible by the Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem Emerging Stars Fund.

Nicola Luisotti's appearance is made possible by the Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem Conductors Fund.

Brian Jagde's and Lianna Haroutounian's appearances are made possible by a gift to the Great Singers Fund by Joan & David Traitel.

Additional support provided by Romana D. Bracco, Eva K. Breyer, and Lawrence A. Kern.

NOVEMBER 8, 13, 16, 20, 24, 26, 2019

The performance will last approximately 3 hours including two intermissions.

Lyric Opera of Chicago production



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

MANON LESCAUT

ACT I

Edmondo leads the merrymaking of a group of students. Des Grieux declares that he knows nothing of love. He then serenades all the ladies present.

A coach from Arras arrives, and all—including Des Grieux—are struck by the beauty of Manon as she alights, accompanied by her brother Lescaut and the roué Geronte de Ravoir. Manon waits for her brother while he enters the inn to arrange for rooms. Des Grieux approaches her and asks her name. When he learns that she is on her way to a convent against her will, he begs her to meet him later to find a way to change her fate. Reluctantly, she promises to return. Des Grieux admits to himself that he is already in love with her.

Lescaut confides to Geronte that he disagrees with his parents' plans for Manon. Geronte invites Lescaut and his sister to dinner, then excuses himself to talk with the innkeeper. Lescaut is soon drawn into a card game with the students. Edmondo informs Des Grieux that the old man is planning to abduct Manon. Upon Manon's return, Des Grieux tells her of the planned abduction. Edmondo then helps the lovers escape in Geronte's carriage. Geronte, meanwhile, discovers what has happened, but Lescaut tells him to be patient: Manon's fondness for luxury will eventually make it possible to lure her away from Des Grieux.

ACT II

Weeks later, now ensconced in Geronte's house, Manon is with an elegant hairdresser. Lescaut admires her, congratulating her on the splendor of her surroundings. Manon asks about Des Grieux, confessing that the luxuries of her new life have not brought her true happiness. Lescaut tells her that Des Grieux still adores her and is gambling in the hope of increasing his fortune. Manon is touched by Des Grieux's fidelity, but her pensive mood is interrupted by a group of musicians. A dancing master appears with Geronte and a group of gentlemen, who are led by Manon in a minuet.

Once Geronte has left, Des Grieux slips into the room. He angrily confronts Manon, who begs him to forgive her for deserting him. She finally convinces him of her affection. Geronte surprises the two and catches them in an intimate state; he threatens them and then abruptly departs. Des Grieux plans to escape with Manon but also reproaches her for her love of luxury. Lescaut bursts in to announce that Geronte has gone for the police. The three are about to leave when Manon pauses to collect her jewels. It is too late: the police arrive and arrest her.

INTERMEZZO: The Journey to Le Havre

ACT III

Des Grieux and Lescaut have bribed a guard to rescue Manon. Des Grieux speaks to her through the prison window. A lamplighter passes, singing a cynical song. A shot rings out—Lescaut's plan has been foiled. The soldiers call the names of the women who are being deported. As Manon takes her place with the other prisoners, Des Grieux is overcome with grief. Despite the guards' warnings, he refuses to leave Manon's side. Finally he pleads with the ship's captain to join the crew, no matter how menial the position. The captain agrees, and Des Grieux rushes into Manon's arms.

ACT IV

With Des Grieux supporting her, the exhausted Manon finds herself on a deserted plain in Louisiana. Uncertain whether to stay or search for help, Des Grieux finally rushes off. Alone, Manon is overwhelmed by terror and despair. Once Des Grieux returns, she has only a few moments with him before she dies.

First performance: Teatro Regio, Turin, February 1, 1893. First performance in the United States: Philadelphia, August 29, 1894.

First San Francisco Opera performance: Civic Auditorium, September 28, 1926. *Manon Lescaut* has been performed in 10 previous seasons at San Francisco Opera. For complete information on all past casts and productions, visit archive.sfopera.com.

Orchestra: 3 flutes (3rd doubles piccolo); 3 oboes (3rd doubles English horn); 2 clarinets; 1 bass clarinet; 2 bassoons; 4 horns; 3 trumpets; 2 trombones & 1 bass trombone; 1 tuba; 1 timpani; 3 percussion; 1 harp; 1 celeste; 40 strings (12 first violins, 9 second violins, 7 violas, 7 cellos, 5 basses); **68 Total.**

Backstage: trumpet, sleighbells, chimes, snare, flute, tam tam.

Personnel: 16 principals, 52 chorus, 25 supernumeraries; **93 total**.

MANON LESCAUT

(Sung in Italian with English supertitles)

Conductor	CAST		
Nicola Luisotti	(in order of vocal appearance)		
Director			
Olivier Tambosi	Edmondo	Christopher Oglesby $^{\downarrow}$	
Production Designer	Chevalier des Grieux	Brian Jagde	
Frank Philipp Schlössmann		Rafael Davila [*] (November 26)	
Lighting Designer	Lescaut	Anthony Clark Evans	
Duane Schuler	Innkeeper	SeokJong Baek [‡]	
Choreographer	Geronte de Revoir	Philip Skinner	
Lawrence Pech	Manon Lescaut	Lianna Haroutounian	
Chorus Director	A Singer	Ashley Dixon [‡]	
lan Robertson	Madrigalists	Angela Eden Moser, Jesslyn Thomas	
Assistant Conductor		Laurel Cameron Porter, Sally Mouzon	
Robert Mollicone	Dancing Master	Zhengyi Bai [‡]	
	Sergeant	William Bryan	
Prompter Vito Lombardi	Lamplighter	Zhengyi Bai [‡]	
	Sergeant of Archers	Christian Pursell $^{\downarrow}$	
Musical Preparation	Naval Captain	SeokJong Baek $^{\downarrow}$	
John Churchwell Tamara Sanikidze	Students, Townspeople, Singers, Dancers, Sailors, Soldiers,		
		men, and Police Guards	
Fabrizio Corona			
Diction	* San Francisco Opera debut	+ Current Adler Fellow	
Alessandra Cattani			
Supertitles		19th Contury Eranoa	
Christopher Bergen	TIME AND PLACE: Early 18th Century. France.		
	ACT I: Courtyard of an Inn at Amiens		
Assistant Director Jose Maria Condemi			
	-INTERMISSION-		
Stage Manager	ACT II: A Luxurious Bedroom in Geronte's House in Paris		
Jayme O'Hara	-INTERMISSION-		
Assistant Stage Managers			
Jessica Barker Jennifer Harber	INTERMEZZO		
E. Reed Fisher ACT III: The Harbor of Le Havre		or of Le Havre	
Costume Supervisor Jai Alltizer	ACT IV: A Barren Wasteland in Louisiana		
Wig and Makeup	l atecomers may not be seated during the p	erformance after the lights have dimmed	
Jeanna Parham	Latecomers may not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed. Patrons who leave during the performance may not be reseated until intermission.		
	Patrons who leave during the performance may not be reseated until intermission. The use of cameras, cell phones, and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden.		
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Please turn off and refrain from using all electronic devices.

Claudia Muzio was San Francisco Opera's first Manon Lesaut, 1926. METROPOLITAN OPERA ARCHIVES

THE MANY FACES AND VOICES of manon

BY IRA SIFF

anon Lescaut was Puccini's first great hit, and, astonishingly, his only unequivocal triumph at its premiere. It had taken a great deal of nerve to challenge Massenet's success with the same subject just nine years earlier, but Puccini quipped, "A woman like Manon can have more than one lover." He was right, and, to take it a step further, she can have more than one interpreter—far more, each with something individual to offer. The episodic nature of the piece has been criticized as disjointed. Yet, it is just this quality that invites *protagonistas* to startle us with the heroine's quicksilver changes of heart, and the singers' abilities to convey them.

Operatic pioneer and San Francisco Opera founder Gaetano Merola was determined to bring first rank stars to his company, and he delivered mouth-watering casts littered with names of legend. Among the most dazzling was the company's first Manon Lescaut, Claudia Muzio. Muzio was a diva who lived her roles. Her engagement and intensity were such that she frequently suffered bouts of physical and emotional exhaustion after performances. In a San Francisco *Traviata*, she clutched Teresina Monotti, who was playing Annina, trembling and crying; Muzio had become Violetta. Maestro Gino Marinuzzi was unable to look at the diva when he conducted her in *Norma*: the level of her involvement was too frightening. And yet, she was known for the brilliant measure

of restraint in all she did. Tenor Giacomo Lauri-Volpi perhaps expressed it best when he described Muzio's voice as "made of tears and sighs and restrained fire."

Although she recorded only Manon's Act II aria, "In quelle trine morbide," circa 1917, one can hear the beauty of the voice, her famous floated *piano* tones (here taken all the way up to a high B-flat), and her ability to color the voice naturally. One only wishes she had documented "Sola, perduta, abbandonata," an aria which would have showcased more her power as a singing actress. But, there is a good reason for its absence among her numer-

ous recordings—Puccini cut the aria for a time, restoring it only in 1923 for La Scala performances commemorating the 30th anniversary of the opera's premiere.

But one has only to turn to other Muzio renditions to imagine the degree of pathos she achieved. Her letter reading and "Addio del passato" from *La Traviata* is considered definitive; her "Voi lo sapete" from *Cavalleria* speaks of unbearable anguish expressed through intense legato and textual incisiveness. A slightly veiled quality to her timbre creates the sensation that there is even more passion brewing within.

The season of 1926, in which Muzio brought her Manon

"Tenor Giacomo Lauri-Volpi perhaps expressed it best when he described Muzio's voice as 'made of tears and sighs and restrained fire." Lescaut to San Francisco, coincided with what is considered absolute prime. her The reviews were ecstatic, running out of superlatives for both her singing and acting. And while she was in town, the enterprising Merola had her appear as well in Aïda, La Bohème, Tosca, and Il Trovatore, all within the space of nine days! Six years later, Muzio was selected to open the War Memorial Opera House, in 1932. She chose one of her other signature roles. Tosca. The first act was broadcast and, even through the primitive sonics of an existing recording, one hears a Puccini singer of supreme greatness.

Muzio is a hard act to follow, but that task fell to Frances Peralta, San Francisco's next Manon Lescaut the following season. Born in Manchester, England as Phyllis Partington,

Peralta's family emigrated to California when she was a child. After a successful stint in comic opera in New York, the soprano traveled to Europe to study, returning to the States for appearances in St. Louis and Chicago, before landing a contract with the Met, with whom she sang from 1921–1930. Although perhaps not inspiring the raves received by Muzio, Peralta's Manon fared well with the critics. The *Chronicle* admired her "clever impersonation and good singing," taking exception only to the quality of a few very high notes. The *Examiner*'s Redfern Mason, reserved at first, was won over, declaring that Peralta's



Frances Peralta, 1927. HERMAN MISHKIN/METROPOLITAN OPERA ARCHIVES

Jussi Björling and Licia Albanese, 1949. R. STROHMEYER

Dorothy Kirsten, 1956. ROBERT LACKENBACH

Manon "appealed to more hearts than [just] that of Des Grieux." Sadly, the year of her Manon Lescaut, Peralta was diagnosed with cancer. She died in 1933 at age 50.

San Francisco had to wait more than two decades for Puccini's early masterpiece to return, but when it did, in 1949, it arrived in style, with Licia Albanese and Jussi Björling in the leading roles. Albanese shared with Muzio a total belief in every word and note she uttered. And despite a reliable technique that took her to a rock-solid high D-flat, Albanese's voice possessed an innate quality of fragility that made her, as the Chronicle critic noted, "probably the world's greatest interpreter of pathetic lyric roles like Manon Lescaut." Her strength was in honesty of delivery rather than vocal effects; in Manon's death scene, Albanese's combination of heartbreaking frailty and powerful desperation was expressed with a directness that both moved and terrified the observer. She brought these qualities to San Francisco over her 17 seasons. Those of us fortunate enough to see Albanese on stage, felt as if we were peeking through a keyhole at a previous generation of singers, getting a glimpse of an about-to-be-lost style.

Another diva devoting herself to Puccini's ladies was Dorothy Kirsten. An American product, Kirsten found her way to opera through pop singing on the radio, and subsequent study financed by opera and movie star Grace Moore, who saw Dorothy as her successor. The decision

to focus her lyric soprano on the heroines of Puccini came partly out of Kirsten's affinity for his music, and partly as a way of branding her image as a *prima donna*. Kirsten was a fascinating combination of old-school diva (obsessed with glamor) and contemporary singing actress (analyzing her characters in modern psychological language). Fiercely intelligent, driven, and thorough, Kirsten was also ultra-careful about protecting her silvery vocal instrument, using the word "no" liberally when offered roles outside her Puccini five: Mimì, Butterfly, Manon, Tosca and Minnie (La Fanciulla del West). Her Manon Lescaut, which reached San Francisco in 1950 and again in '56 and '67 was found by some critics to be a bit cool. But San Francisco audiences loved the soprano. She opened the season six times over a quarter-century, having become a household name through decades of radio and television appearances, as well as film-most notably opposite Mario Lanza in The Great Caruso. Although her rather put-together image garnered some criticism for a certain lack of spontaneity, Kirsten was tirelessly devoted to quality in her performances, and brought out the best in several generations of tenors.

Another American diva and San Francisco favorite, Leontyne Price, introduced her Manon to the city in 1974. A supreme Verdi soprano, whose forays into Puccini included Butterfly, Liù, and Giorgetta (*Il Tabarro*), Manon



Leontyne Price, 1974 RON SCHERL

Mirella Freni, 1983. ROBERT CAHEN

Karita Mattila, 2006. TERRENCE MCCARTHY

seemed like a less than ideal vehicle for what critic Alexander Fried termed this "mature, stately figure." However, Robert Commanday in the *Chronicle* felt that Price "delivered the goods," with her radiant singing as well as a new level of character development for this artist. While Price may have been a bit static as the naïve, young Manon, in the second act she romped about the stage, enjoying Manon's play-acting for her admirers, getting some laughs, and spinning out an elegant line in the faux Baroque arietta "L'ora o Tirsi," crowning it with an endless high C. If Price's lush instrument was a bit smoky for the delicate moments of the death scene, she nonetheless gave it her considerable all, to moving effect.

Mirella Freni seemed to be turning a corner with her Manon in 1983, as the soprano approached the later phase of her career with a new-found no-holds-barred dramatic conviction. Always vocally sublime, but sometimes careful and reserved, Freni now dug into the character's text and vocal line with added intensity, more use of chest voice, and textual variety. The result was a Manon authentically Italianate, and unfailingly persuasive through all four acts. Her "In quelle trine morbide" was a revelation, bringing down the house, and the diva sustained this pitch of excitement right through to the death scene.

1988 found the Spanish Mozart soprano Pilar Lorengar offering a late-career Manon that was found to be somewhat lacking dramatically, visually, and, in the lower reaches, vocally. But Manon's 21st century history at San Francisco Opera began with a bang with the colorful impersonation of Finnish soprano Karita Mattila. Mattila began her career as a tall, attractive young woman with a lovely voice and developed into one of the era's great singing actresses. It is no wonder that this soprano stressed the theatrical side of the character. Those looking for the Italian style of an Albanese or Freni, had to look elsewhere. But Mattila brought a highly individual interpretation, subdued but simmering in the first act, wild and eccentric in the second act dance lesson-she capped "L'ora o Tirsi" not only with a high C, but a gymnastic split!-building to a shattering death scene, "Sola, perduta" sung on the stage floor, her body contorting from physical exhaustion and emotional desperation.

So many ways to approach a role with various possibilities! And now Lianna Haroutounian joins the list of illustrious predecessors who've given San Francisco Opera remarkably different takes on Puccini's mercurial heroine.

Ira Siff is the commentator on the Saturday Afternoon Metropolitan Opera Broadcasts, a voice teacher/repertoire coach, lecturer, and contributor to Opera News.



LOVE ACTUALLY puccini's first triumph and the future of italian opera

BY WILLIAM BERGER

ying just outside the center of the repertory (a core dominated by Giacomo Puccini's subsequent three operas, *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, and *Madama Butterfly*), *Manon Lescaut* stakes its greatness on two foundations: its role in Puccini's personal history, and its own unique treasures.

We cherish Puccini as the supreme love composer, but

this opera contains his best actual love scene. Act I of *La Bohème* features an awareness of attraction. We don't see Mimì and Rodolfo make love; they decide to get dinner first and negotiate love later. *Tosca*'s duet is also a contract to make love later. *Butterfly* is something else entirely: two people with opposing agendas. In *Manon Lescaut*, Puccini nailed one operatic idea better than any

other composer before or since (including himself): two people simultaneously saying "You are so beautiful, I must have you right here, right now, no matter what." This Act II love scene could only have been written by Puccini, and only at this age (he began writing it at 32). It doesn't happen quite this way or this well in any other opera.

Think about it: Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* is so farreaching that it goes beyond the physicality of the two lovers and into the cosmos, where it becomes a duet of philosophical speculation, encompassing vast philosophical speculation. The great conductor Arturo Toscanini, who had a close but fraught relationship with Puccini and who, like Puccini, revered *Tristan*, famously remarked "if those were Italians, they'd have had seven children by now. But they're Germans, so they're still talking about it."

Manon Lescaut has no detour into philosophy or dinner; everything is right there on stage. And, as Toscanini suggested of Italian lovemaking, it creates something: the great composer Puccini himself. He discovered a certain mastery in that very scene (yes, there is top-quality opera in Act I and the beginning of Act II, but Puccini's specific genius bursts forth with the duet). The wild success of *Manon Lescaut*'s opening night, at Turin's Teatro Regio on February 1st, 1893, tells us the public had found a great new talent. *Manon Lescaut* catapulted Puccini to the top of the world's opera composers (to the annoyance and envy of many others).

Few, however, foresaw a success on the morning of the premiere. To begin with, Puccini's struggles with the libretto were known publicly. He had begun the process of Giulio Ricordi (a brilliant mind behind Verdi for decades) hired another author/poet team, Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica. These two, future collaborators on Puccini's most successful works, were magical but not yet infallible. When Puccini needed more tweaks, he once again asked Leoncavallo for help. Ricordi himself contributed editorial suggestions and is often listed, along with the other five (and one more who contributed one line thirty years later), as librettist. Many scores list no librettists at all.

Other factors contributed to the unease prior to the opening. There was simply too much pressure to succeed; the House of Ricordi needed a huge hit in order to survive. They owned the rights to Verdi, but not even he (then in his 80th year) could go on forever. Verdi's opera Falstaff would have its world premiere in nearby Milan a mere week later. But the question remained—who was the "heir apparent"? The obvious "successor to Verdi" seemed to be Puccini's one-time roommate Pietro Mascagni, whose one-act thriller Cavalleria Rusticana caused a sensation at its 1891 Rome premiere. It was the result of a competition by a rival publisher, Sonzogno. Cavalleria seemed to represent a young generation: brash, short, written for the "new" national capital, Rome, rather than the old opera capital, Milan-in short, everything Verdi was not. Leoncavallo produced his own opera Pagliacci (1892), and these and others were hailed as a new style, verismo. Would this be the new direction of Italian opera?

Not all Italians thought so. Another composer, Alfredo Catalani, rejected scruffy *verismo* and composed romantic works in his own style. His opera *La Wally* premiered in

adapting the novel, a profoundly influential work from 18th Century France by the Abbé Prévost, with his sometime friend and fellow rising composer, Ruggero Leoncavallo. That collaboration sputtered, and Puccini asked the dramatist Marco Praga to take over. Praga tried to beg off, citing his inexperience with music, but Puccini convinced him to proceed with the help of poet Domenico Oliva. They created a libretto, but Puccini wanted changes. He tossed out an entire scene and demanded a new one (the Act III finale). Praga and Oliva quit. Puccini's publisher



Giacomo Puccini with librettists Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica. A. DAGLI ORTI/DE AGOSTINI PICTURE LIBRARY/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Milan in 1892, championed by his devoted friend, Toscanini. Catalani died shortly after, embittered by the attention being shown other composers (particularly Puccini), and leaving Toscanini ruing what might have been.

Perhaps the future of opera would not be Italian at all. The French had their own notions: *Carmen* (1875) was finally recognized as a masterpiece. Jules Massenet's *Manon* (1884), also based on Prévost's novel, was an international hit positively trumpeting its utter "Frenchness." The superb score made references to music from France's glorious

"Interestingly, when Massenet's heroine is dressed and coiffed and being admired by all Paris, she says 'I am beautiful; I am happy." In Puccini's analogous moment (the Act II levée), she is bored."

past (a gavotte as well as Rameau-esque ballet music) and reveled in the French language. *Manon* was nothing short of a declaration of French cultural supremacy.

And other countries were enshrining their own cultures in opera. The Russian Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* was a sort of claim of national independence from Italian domination, as was Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*. Composers from Bohemia, Brazil, and everywhere else were creating works that bypassed Italy altogether.

Imagine, then, how puzzled the public must have been at Puccini's entry into the operatic sweepstakes. First, there was the folly of subject choice: *Manon Lescaut*! One couldn't encapsulate Manon better than Massenet. Puccini relished the challenge as always—he later became excited about composing *La Bohème* and *Tosca* only after he learned other composers (Leoncavallo and Franchetti, respectively) were working on the same subjects. He famously said, "a woman like Manon can handle more than one lover." He made another statement which is too often quoted uncritically, "Massenet felt it as a Frenchman, with powder and minuets. I shall feel it as an Italian, with a desperate passion."

There's plenty of desperate passion in Massenet's score, and there's plenty of powder in Puccini's (the Act II levée). And yet, as with Toscanini's comment about *Tristan*, Puccini was onto something. He felt the story as an Italian in more ways than desperate passion. Or better yet, he felt the story as he felt *Tristan* (the operatic Epic of Love, in a sense, and therefore an archetype of *Manon Lescaut*). Puccini's great love duet not only begins with a great rushing swirl in the orchestra, like Wagner's, but it likewise builds to a climax with unresolved ascending phrases. It is Wagner's "endless melody" but faster and more economical. The Italian desire for tangible results (cf. Toscanini's comment) might refer to a certain impatience, especially in a young person. Interestingly, when Massenet's heroine is dressed and coiffed and being admired by all Paris, she says "I am beautiful; I am happy." In Puccini's analogous moment (the Act II levée), she is bored.

Massenet had his heroine die on a French road. Puccini's Manon (per the novel) dies in the "deserts of Louisiana" (and stop tittering ... there were plenty of desert(ed) wastelands in the Louisiana Territory). The lifelessness of the landscape reminds some people of the supreme musical depiction of bleakness at the beginning of the last act of Tristan. I also detect another moment in *Manon Lescaut* as a Puccinian version of a *Tristan* trope: the Act III roll call of the prostitutes to be deported to the New World. This was Puccini's own idea, and two of his librettists quit rather than write it. The scene's build-up is superb, with individual voices merging with each other and the assembled chorus as seamlessly as streams into a river. The waves of music recall the love duet but are also a communal sob, a rolling lamentation about life and loss. The waves signify more than physical crying: the sea is in the background, with its rising and falling tides causing ships to sway. The personal has been projected onto nature and nature's cycles, which both mark, and are outside of, time itself. If that isn't Tristan, nothing is. But Puccini, unlike the German Wagner, simply never talked about it (nor did he write volumes of confrontational prose about it like Wagner). Like Toscanini's definition of Italians in action, he let the work speak for itself and bear its own progeny. That progeny is not only Puccini's first great opera, but a work that carves out its own unique place in the opera house and in our affection. 👘

William Berger is the author of the books Puccini Without Excuses, Verdi With A Vengeance, and Wagner Without Fear (Vintage), and he is a co-host during live Metropolitan Opera radio broadcasts.

ARTIST PROFILES

* San Francisco Opera Debut 🎝 Role Debut



NICOLA LUISOTTI (Viareggio, Italy) Conductor San Francisco Opera Highlights: Music Director of San Francisco Opera 2009–2018; Conducted

over 40 operas and

concerts with the Company, including Marco Tutino's *Two Women; Salome; Lohengrin; Don Carlo; Le Nozze di Figaro; Don Giovanni; Cosi fan tutte; Mefistofele;* Verdi Requiem; Awarded San Francisco Opera Medal (2018)

Recent and Upcoming: Turandot (Madrid's Teatro Real); Aida (Metropolitan Opera); Rigoletto (Metropolitan Opera); La Traviata (Metropolitan Opera, Madrid); La Forza del Destino (Paris Opéra); Don Carlo (Madrid); Il Trovatore (Milan's Teatro alla Scala); Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (Madrid's Auditorio Nacional de Música); Concerts with Symphoniker Hamburg: Atlanta Symphony; Orchestra del Teatro Massimo di Palermo; Bilbao Orkestra Sinfonikoa; Orchestra Teatro Regio Torino

Principal Guest Conductor of Madrid's Teatro Real



LIANNA HAROUTOUNIAN J

Soprano (Metsamor, Armenia) Manon Lescaut San Francisco Opera Highlights: Title role of *Madama Butterfly*; Nedda in *Pagliacci*; title role of *Tosca*

Recent and Upcoming: Title role of Madama Butterfly (Hamburg State Opera, Seattle Opera, Vienna State Opera, Gran Teatre del Liceu, Royal Opera Covent Garden, Lyric Opera of Chicago); Leonora in Il Trovatore (Covent Garden, Madrid's Teatro Real); Elisabeth in Don Carlos (Hamburg); Elisabetta in Don Carlo (Berlin State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin); title role of Iolanta (Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia Valencia); title role of Tosca (Valencia, Malmö Opera); Mimì in La Bohème (Opera de las Palmas Spain); title role of Norma (Baluarte Pamplona) Gliannaharoutouniansoprano

🖸 @liannahar



BRIAN JAGDE 🕽

Tenor (New York, New York) **Chevalier des Grieux San Francisco Opera Highlights:** Cavaradossi in *Tosca*; Calaf in *Turandot*; Radames in *Aida*; Don José in *Carmen*; Pinkerton in

Madama Butterfly

Recent and Upcoming: Des Grieux in Manon Lescaut (Deutsche Oper Berlin); Don José in Carmen (Royal Opera Covent Garden); Calaf in Turandot (Teatro Massimo Palermo); Turiddu in Cavalleria Rusticana (Dutch National Opera, Dresdner Philharmonie); Luigi in Il Tabarro (Dresdner Philharmonie); Enzo Grimaldi in La Gioconda (Gran Teatre del Liceu); Don Alvaro in La Forza del Destino (Paris Opéra); Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Cavaradossi in Tosca (Vienna State Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden); Prince in Rusalka (Amsterdam)

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship 2010, 2011, 2012 Merola Opera Program 2009

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Website: https://brianjagde.com/



RAFAEL DAVILA * Tenor (Carolina, Puerto Rico) Chevalier des Grieux Recent and Upcoming: Don José in Carmen (Matranalitan Opara

of Kansas City, Florida Grand Opera, New

Orleans Opera, Opera de Puerto Rico); Des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut* (Valencia); Dick Johnson in *La Fanciulla del West* (Minnesota, Michigan Opera Theatre); Cavaradossi in *Tosca* (Leipzig, Puerto Rico, Arizona Opera); title role of *Don Carlo* (Washington); General Alfredo in Jimmy López's *Bel Canto* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Radames in *Aida* (Valencia); Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Macerata Festival); Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Florida); title role of *Otello* (Teatro de la Opera)



ANTHONY CLARK EVANS ♪

Baritone (Owensboro, Kentucky) Lescaut San Francisco Opera Highlights: Sharpless in Madama Butterfly Recent and Upcoming: Sharpless in Madama

Butterfly (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera

Philadelphia); Brander in Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* (Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra); title role of *Rigoletto* (Kentucky Opera); Zurga in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* (Santa Fe Opera); Leporello in *Don Giovanni* (Tulsa Opera); Tonio in *Pagliacci* (Opera San José); Marcello in *La Bohème* (Dallas Opera); William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* (Royal Scottish National Orchestra); Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (Phoenix Symphony)

@@anthony_clark_evans



PHILIP SKINNER ^J Bass-Baritone (Jacksonville, Florida) Geronte di Ravoir San Francisco Opera Highlights: Baron Douphol in *La Traviata*; King Priam in *Les Troyens*; Edgar Ray Killen in Philip Glass'

Appomattox; The Speaker in Die Zauberflöte; Rambaldo Fernandez in La Rondine; The Water Spirit in Rusalka; Escamillo in Carmen; Ferrando in Il Trovatore; Colline in La Bohème; Lorenzo in I Capuleti e i Montecchi; Dansker in Billy Budd; The Duke of Verona in Roméo et Juliette

Recent and Upcoming: Henry Wilcox in Allen Shearer's *Howards End America* (San Francisco); Olin Blitch in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* (Festival Opera); Kikititsch in *Boris Godunov* (San Francisco Symphony); Scarpia in *Tosca* (Sacramento Opera, Festival Opera); Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande* (West Edge Opera); King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde* (Claude Heater Foundation concert Herbst Theatre); King in Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince* (Opera Parallèle); The Duke of Verona in *Roméo et Juliette*

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship 1986, 1987

Merola Opera Program 1985



CHRISTOPHER OGLESBY ♪ Tenor (Woodstock, Georgia) Edmondo San Francisco Opera Highlights: El Dancairo in Carmen; Benvolio in Roméo et Juliette Recent and

Upcoming: Boris in Káťa Kabanová (West Edge Opera); Tybalt in Roméo et Juliette (Utah Opera); Handel's Messiah (Utah Symphony); Tom Rakewell in The Rake's Progress (Merola Opera Program); Tamino in Die Zauberflöte (Amalfi Coast Festival); Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni (University of North Texas); Box in Cox & Box (Opera in Concert) San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship 2019 Merola Opera Program 2018 Proud to Support the Arts in the Bay Area

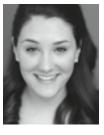
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ARTIST PROFILES



ASHLEY DIXON ♪ Mezzo-Soprano

(Peachtree City, Georgia) **A Singer**

San Francisco Opera

Highlights: Angel First Class in Jake Heggie's It's a Wonderful Life; Mercédès in Carmen:

Third Wood Nymph in *Rusalka* **Recent and Upcoming:** The Sandman in *Hansel and Gretel* (San Francisco Opera); Angelina in *La Cenerentola* (Dayton Opera); Mrs. Splinters in Copland's *The Tender Land* (Michigan Opera Theatre); Merola Opera Program: Popova in William Walton's *The Bear*, La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi*; Mrs. Nolan in Menotti's *The Medium*.

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship 2018, 2019

Merola Opera Program 2015, 2017



ZHENGYI BAI J Tenor (Linyi, China) A Dancing Master/ A Lamp-Lighter San Francisco Opera Highlights: El Remendado in *Carmen* Recent and Upcoming: Alessandro

Upcoming: Alessandro in *Il Re Pastore* (Merola

Opera Program); Bénédict in *Béatrice et Bénédict*; Oronte in *Alcina*; Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*; Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*; Mr. Owen in *Postcard from Morocco*

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship 2019 Merola Opera Program 2018



Baritone (Jeon-Ju, South Korea) The Innkeeper/ A Naval Captain San Francisco Opera Highlights: Moralès in Carmen; Gregorio in Roméo et Juliette Recent and

SEOKJONG BAEK ↓

Upcoming: Schwabacher Summer Concert; Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly* (Lyric Opera of Kansas City); Germont in *La Traviata* (Aspen Music Festival); Tschang in *Das Land des Lächelns* (Manhattan School of Music); Gautru in *Le Roi l'a Dit* (Manhattan School of Music)

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship 2019 Merola Opera Program 2018



CHRISTIAN PURSELL ♪

Bass-Baritone (Santa Cruz, California) A Sergeant of Archers San Francisco Opera Highlights: Walter Raleigh in *Roberto Devereux*; Jailer in *Tosca*; Count Lamoral in *Arabella*; Angel First

Class in Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life*; Mr. Ratcliffe in *Billy Budd*

Recent and Upcoming: Escamillo in *Carmen* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis); Handel's *Messiah* (Mormon Tabernacle Choir); 5th Jew in *Salome* (Dallas Symphony); Samuel in Handel's *Saul* (Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra); Dandini in *La Cenerentola* (Merola Opera Program); Tom in Laura Kaminsky's *Some Light Emerges* (Houston Grand Opera); Second Englishman in Prokofiev's *The Gambler* (Vienna State Opera); Britten's War Requiem; Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*; Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship 2018, 2019

Merola Opera Program 2017



ANGELA EDEN MOSER Ĵ

Soprano (Claremont, California) Madrigal Singer San Francisco Opera Highlights: Seeker in Mark Adamo's The Gospel of Mary Magdalene; Woman's Voice in Jenůfa

Member of San Francisco Opera Chorus since 2002

Recent and Upcoming: Donna Anna in Don Giovanni (Open Opera, Virago Theater), Giulietta in Les Contes d'Hoffmann (Pocket Opera); Madame Herz in Mozart's Der Schauspieldirektor (Capitol Opera); Ereshkigal in Marcia Burchard's The Descent of Inanna (Chrysalis Productions); Sophia in Marcia Burchard's The Mystery of Love (Chrysalis Productions); Mahler's Symphony No. 2; Verdi Requiem; Mozart Requiem; Vivaldi Gloria; Haydn's Coronation Mass; Poulenc Gloria; Orff's Carmina Burana; Fauré Requiem (a) angela_eden_moser



JESSLYN THOMAS ^J Soprano (Rindge, New Hampshire) Madrigal Singer San Francisco Opera Highlights: Mrs. O'Malley in Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life* Member of San

Francisco Opera Chorus Recent and Upcoming: Bridesmaid in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (San Francisco Opera)



LAUREL CAMERON PORTER Ĵ

Mezzo-Soprano (Hopkins, Minnesota) Madrigal Singer San Francisco Opera Highlights: Chorus Seeker in Mark Adamo's *The Gospel* of Mary Magdalene;

Mother in *Madama Butterfly*; Apprentice in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*; Quintet and Ensemble member in *Sweeney Todd* Member of San Francisco Opera Chorus **Recent and Upcoming**: Second Bridesmaid in *Le Nozze di Figaro*



SALLY MOUZON Mezzo-Soprano (Alexandria, Virginia) Madrigal Singer San Francisco Opera Highlights: Fisherwoman in Peter Grimes; La Popolana (Old Woman) in Marco Tutino's Two Women;

Joan in Christopher Theofanidis' *Heart of a Soldier*; Sister Lillianne in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*; Second Priestess in *Iphigénie en Tauride*; Second Bridesmaid in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; Second Girl in *Show Boat*; Second Noble Orphan in *Der Rosenkavalier*; Marguérite and Coal Gatherer in *Louise* Member of San Francisco Opera Chorus **Recent and Upcoming**: Recital of Beethoven and Haydn (Virginia); Elle in *La Voix Humaine* (Poulenc celebration) @sallymezzo



OLIVIER TAMBOSI (Paris, France) Director San Francisco Opera Highlights: Manon Lescaut; The Makropulos Case; Falstaff; Jenùfa Recent and Upcoming: Directed

more than 120 opera productions worldwide; Jenüfa (Metropolitan Opera); Millöcker's Gasparone (Volksoper Vienna); Piazzolla's María de Buenos Aires (Bregenz Festival) Faccio's Hamlet (Oper Chemnitz Germany); Così fan tutte (Stuttgart); Haydn's La Fedeltà Premiata (Graz Austria) Sehyung Kim's Consumnia (Graz); Sweeney Todd (Biel Switzerland); Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream (Prinzregententheater Munich); Boito's Nerone (Bregenz)





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FRANK PHILIPP SCHLÖSSMANN (Bad König, Germany) Production Designer San Francisco Opera Highlights: Manon Lescaut; The Makropulos Case; Jenůfa; Falstaff Recent and

Upcoming: The Merry Widow (Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe); L'Elisir d'Amore (Staatsoper Berlin); La Traviata (Oper Leipzig, Saarländisches Staatstheater Saarbrücken, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Deutsche Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf); Der Rosenkavalier (Nationaltheater Mannheim); Die Fledermaus (Deutsche Oper am Rhein); La Bohème (Saarbrücken); Attila (Mariinsky Theatre); Ring cycle (Minden Stadttheater); Così fan tutte (Aalto-Musiktheater Essen); Der Fliegende Holländer (Volksoper Vienna); Madama Butterfly (Theater Dortmund Opernhaus)



DUANE SCHULER (Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin) Lighting Designer San Francisco Opera Highlights: Ariadne auf Naxos; Der Fliegende Holländer, L'Italiana in Algeri; Manon Lescaut; Tristan und Isolde;

Ariodante; La Rondine; Boris Godunov; La Bohème; Faust, La Fanciulla del West; Otello; The Makropulos Case; Werther; Mefistofele; Don Pasquale

Recent and Upcoming: Ernani (San Francisco Opera); La Cenerentola (Dutch National Opera); Cendrillon (Metropolitan Opera); Turandot (Milan's Teatro alla Scala); Pelléas et Mélisande (Metropolitan Opera); La Fanciulla del West (Paris Opéra); Elektra (Salzburg Festival); Fidelio (Royal Opera Covent Garden); Béatrice et Bénédict (Glyndebourne); Candide (Santa Fe Opera); Don Giovanni (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Hansel and Gretel (LA Opera); Lucia di Lammermoor (Vienna State Opera) Founding partner of Schuler Shook

ARTIST PROFILES

DAVE MAIER

(El Cerrito, California) Fight Director San Francisco Opera Highlights: Carmen; Tosca; the Ring cycle; Pagliacci; Rigoletto; Billy Budd; Roméo et Juliette

Recent and

Upcoming: House of Joy (Cal Shakes); Rhinoceros (American Conservatory Theatre); Oedipus el Rey (Magic Theatre); Wink (Marin Theatre Co.); West Side Story (Berkeley Playhouse); Kill Move Paradise (Shotgun Players); Communicating Doors (Center Rep); Cabaret (Stanford University)



LAWRENCE PECH

(San Francisco, California) Choreographer San Francisco Opera Highlights: Dance Master/

Choreographer of 120 productions in 23 years including *Rusalka*;

Roberto Devereux; Cavalleria Rusticana/ Pagliacci; John Adams' Girls of the Golden West; Die Zauberflöte; Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg; Carlisle Floyd's Susannah; Show Boat; Les Troyens; Christopher Theofanidis' Heart of a Soldier; Aida; Porgy and Bess; Die Tote Stadt; The Rake's Progress; La Rondine; the Ring cycle; John Adams' Doctor Atomic; The Merry Widow; Iphigénie en Tauride; The Ballad of Baby Doe; Turandot; Guillaume Tell; Eugene Onegin



IAN ROBERTSON (Dundee, Scotland) Chorus Director Mainstage: Conductor of Lohengrin; Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk; Il Trovatore; Rigoletto; La Traviata; Don Carlo; Turandot; La Bohème. Chorus Director for

over 300 productions, including world premiere commissions. Concerts: Conductor of San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus at Stern Grove Festival; Yerba Buena Gardens; Northern California tour. Merola Opera Program: Conductor of *La Perichole; Cosi fan tutte*; Grand Finale concerts. Awarded Olivier Messiaen Foundation Prize for *Saint François d'Assise* (2003); San Francisco Opera Medal (2012). Artistic Director Emeritus of the San Francisco Boys Chorus which he led as Artistic Director for 23 years



SUPERNUMARIES

Susan Anderson-Norby Bruce Bowen Mark Burstein James Crow Maria Dulmage Marissa Israel Andrew Korniej Lynn Meinhardt Heidi Munzinger Frankie Reichman Cole Richardson-Beatty Paul Romito Jen Rost Pablo Sanfrancisco Jessica Smith Doug Spradlin Paige Tagliafico Kimberly Thompson Miles Walls Carolyn Waugh Irving Wiltshire Laurel Winzler Yasmin Yamat

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CAPRICCIO BY RICHARD STRAUSS, 1990

Strauss' work about what matters most in opera—words or music—returned to San Francisco Opera in a high-fashion production featuring costumes by Gianni Versace and Kiri Te Kanawa as the Countess. PHOTOGRAPHER: LARRY MERKLE

IN MEMORIAM

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



GREG PETERSON

HEATHER HARPER, soprano

Heather Harper's flexibility catapulted her to the greatness her voice merited. Early in her career, when the BBC Chorus had no openings for her voice type, the Belfast-born soprano successfully claimed a spot

singing as a mezzo-soprano. Years later, with only 10 days' notice, she would step on stage to perform in the world premiere of composer Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem.* It was a move that would cement her status among her generation's greatest performers. While she would go on to sing in other world premieres—for works including Michael Tippett's *The Ice Break*—her association with Britten proved to be lasting. Her portrayal of Ellen Orford in Britten's opera *Peter Grimes* is often considered definitive. She performed that role with San Francisco Opera in 1976 for her final appearance here after making her 1975 Company debut as Charlotte in *Werther*.



MARTY SOHL

ANDRÉ PREVIN, composer and conductor

It was a titan of a task: how to adapt one of Tennessee Williams' literary milestones, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, for the opera stage. The composer gutsy enough to tackle that work had to be inventive. Ambitious. Flu-

ent in both classical music and jazz. San Francisco Opera's fourth general director, Lotfi Mansouri, ultimately found just the man: André Previn. Propelled to pop-culture royalty by his third marriage, to actor Mia Farrow, Previn was best known as a virtuoso composer, as well as for his work behind the piano and the conductor's podium. The "wunderkind in a turtleneck" nabbed 11 Academy Award nominations and four wins for his musical scores, and his jazz improvisations earned him the admiration of legends like Dizzy Gillespie and Ella Fitzgerald. His world premiere adaptation of *A Streetcar Named Desire* here in 1998 starred one of opera's budding luminaries: Renée Fleming.



LOUIS MELANCON

FRANCO ZEFFIRELLI, *director*

Opera is written into the very legend of Franco Zeffirelli's life. Faced with naming a child born out of wedlock, his mother allegedly turned to the operas of Mozart, plucking the word for a little breeze—"zeffiretti"—from

one of his arias. A subsequent misspelling gave the world a name that would become synonymous with cinematic and theatrical opulence: Zeffirelli. He brought his larger-thanlife touch to San Francisco Opera in 1962, with a set design for Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. In its review, the *San Francisco Chronicle* puzzled over the "super-colossal architecture" that appeared in one scene and the "dwarfed proportions" that appeared in the next. Zeffirelli remains best known for his monumental opera productions, including his 1981 staging of *La Bohème* and 1987 *Turandot* (both of which are in the Metropolitan Opera's repertory this season), his 1968 film *Romeo and Juliet*, and his work with some of the 20th century's biggest stars, including Maria Callas, Elizabeth Taylor, and Richard Burton.



ALAN MALOUF, patron and San Francisco Opera Guild supporter

If you happened to wind your way up to Box B in the War Memorial Opera House during a Tuesday night performance, chances are you'd bump into longtime San Francisco Opera patron Alan

Malouf. Referred to as "the dentist to the stars," Malouf was a passionate supporter of the arts, himself an avid pianist. He was also a frequent and head-turning presence at San Francisco Opera's galas, where he leant his support to the San Francisco Opera Guild. Malouf's appearances were particularly notable for his fashion savvy: The son of a textile manufacturer, he boasted a formidable collection of sharply cut suits and cufflinks. His support helped make San Francisco Opera's productions possible, and San Francisco Opera Guild President Mary Poland says Malouf is remembered as a "true standard-bearer for our community."



WILLIAM "BILL" GODWARD, former president of the San Francisco Opera Association A champion for new talent.

That's how General Director Matthew Shilvock remembers William "Bill" Godward, a pillar of the San Francisco Opera com-

munity. Born in 1913, he moved to California at age eight, before there was even a San Francisco Opera to attend. He spent a lifetime enjoying classical music in the Bay Area, even seeing Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff in a San Francisco performance. His enthusiasm led him to a seat on the Opera Board in 1971—and eventually, to the Board presidency. The longtime lawyer and Navy veteran helped San Francisco Opera to navigate a seismic retrofit that closed the War Memorial Opera House for 18 months, ensuring that the show did indeed go on, if but elsewhere. He passed away this February at age 105.



ALLAN ULRICH, *arts critic* For over four decades, Allan Ulrich advocated passionately for the highest standards in dance, opera, and classical music in the Bay Area and beyond. His critical opinions, supremely informed and forthright, were eagerly read by

KAREN MALKSON

the public and commanded the respect of industry professionals. He joined the *San Francisco Examiner* in 1980, and he soon began covering dance and classical music. Ulrich eventually landed a position as *San Francisco Chronicle*'s chief dance critic—though he had an insatiable appetite for arts of all stripes—and his articles appeared in publications the world over, from the *Los Angeles Times* to London's *Financial Times*. In 2018, his health failing, Ulrich undertook what would be his final review of San Francisco Opera: a look at Wagner's *Ring* cycle for *Opera* magazine. *San Francisco Chronicle*'s classical music critic Joshua Kosman described Ulrich's writing as "erudite, acerbic, and elegantly crafted."

ROBERT ORTH, baritone

The Bay Area knows well the originality of baritone Robert Orth. He embodied one of San Francisco's most iconic figures, tackling the title role at San Francisco Opera's world premiere of Stewart Wallace and Michael Korie's *Harvey*



Milk. Then, in 2000, he went on to create another original role on our stage—that of Owen Hart in Jake Heggie and Terrence McNally's *Dead Man Walking*. But becoming one of opera's most sought-after leading men was not his original career trajectory. Orth spent nine years

teaching in Chicago public schools before making the leap to opera. As a singer, Orth worked on new pieces with an array of composers, including André Previn, Terence Blanchard, and Ricky Ian Gordon. In his last appearance on our stage, Orth reprised yet another role he originated: that of Stubb in Jake Heggie's *Moby–Dick*.



HAROLD "HAL" PRINCE, *director*

"No show gets a free ride because you had a success before. You are as naked as you were the first day you worked." Despite his 21 Tony wins—an unprecedented number in Broadway history—director and

NTERFOTO / ALAMY STOCK PHO

producer Hal Prince had a reputation for pursuing ever more ambitious projects. Best recognized for musical theater blockbusters like *West Side Story* and *Cabaret*, Prince also worked in opera, and two of his productions were presented on the San Francisco Opera stage. His staging of *La Fanciulla del West* came in 1979, followed by *Madama Butterfly* in 2010. In its *Butterfly* review, the *San Francisco Chronicle* marveled at the "ornate beauty" of Prince's work, but Prince himself never publicly put much stock in accolades. As he told *The New York Times*, "History is littered with great works of art that got terrible reviews."



JESSYE NORMAN, soprano

"Pigeonholes are only comfortable for pigeons." Those words, credited to a young Jessye Norman, would come to define her career. While her first concert here, in 1986, was devoted solely to the music of Richard Strauss,

Norman's next two recitals tripped from composer to composer, never constrained by style or era. Those 1989

and 1993 performances allowed her to bring her regal, velvety sound to composers as distinct as Handel and Schönberg. Critic Allan Ulrich raved that Norman stood "at the vanguard of a new generation pledged to exploring this most intimate of musical forms"-the recital. But her legacy radiated far beyond the concert stage. The American soprano was a prolific recording artist and performed the world over in operas including Ariadne auf Naxos, Die Walküre, Bluebeard's Castle, and Oedipus Rex. Her work earned her four Grammy Awards, including the award for lifetime achievement, as well as a National Medal of Arts and a 1997 Kennedy Center Honors Award. She was also a tireless advocate for diversity and representation in the arts, promoting the careers of black artists while also elevating the legacies of long-forgotten trailblazers like Sissieretta Jones.



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MARTIN BERNHEIMER. critic

"This was opera by the numbers. Dull numbers." Los Angeles Times music critic Martin Bernheimer never minced his words when reviewing a show. But like all great reviewers, his aim was not to dismiss but to elevate. Passion seeped into his every word, transforming his reviews

into the thrilling, vicarious experiences that ultimately earned him the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for criticism. Opera was foundational to his career: In an interview with Brown University's alumni magazine, he recalled how opera was his "first love"-and how he submitted his first article to Opera News at age 14. It was cut just prior to publication. But that did not deter Bernheimer, who went on to review productions at San Francisco Opera and elsewhere. He established a legacy as a champion of the art form-and of criticism itself.



MARCELLO GIORDANI, tenor

Doomed romances were something of a hallmark for Marcello Giordani at San Francisco Opera. The dashing Sicilian tenor starred in six of opera's great love stories here: He held a dving Aida in his arms as

Radamès, flirted by candlelight as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*,

and makes the ultimate sacrifice as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, to name a few of his roles. His Company debut came in 1991, when he played Alfredo in that season's opening production of La Traviata. In its review, the San Francisco Chronicle remarked on Giordani's "dark, firm and even tenor voice," calling him "wholly persuasive" in the opera's devastating final act. But opera wasn't the singer's first career: He got his start working at a bank until age 19, when his father agreed to support him as he pursued a singing career in Milan. He ultimately appeared in 27 roles at the Metropolitan Opera, where general manager Peter Gelb referred to him as "one of our most important singers."



DOROTHY JEFFRIES, patron and supporter

No challenge was too great for Dorothy Jeffries. The Massachusetts-born Jeffries was the first in her family to go to college, and when her ambitions took her bevond New England, she left for California and a job

as a flight attendant, flying from Honolulu to San Francisco. While her career changed and her family grew, she established deep roots in the Bay Area as a bastion of the arts community. A San Francisco Opera subscriber since 1982, Jeffries became part of the Company's board in 1998, a position she held for 21 years. She and her husband, Brad Jeffries, made one of the lead gifts to help build the Wilsey Center's John M. Bryan Education Studio, and they supported a generation of young artists through the Adler Fellowship Program, including Efraín Solís, Daniela Mack, Alek Shrader, David Lomeli, and Melody Moore.

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PERCUSSION

Richard Kvistad, *Principal/Associate Timpani* Patricia Niemi

HARP Olga Ortenberg-Rakitchenkov

LIBRARIAN Carrie Weick Timothy Spears, *Assistant*

ORCHESTRA MANAGER Tracy Davis Timothy Spears, *Assistant*

* Principal for one or more Fall season operas ‡ Leave of absence ** Season substitute

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ORCHESTRA



Kay Stern Concertmaster



Laura Albers Associate Concertmaster



Heidi Wilcox Assistant Concertmaster



Jennifer Cho First Violin



Dawn Harms First Violin



Mariya Borozina First Violin



Barbara Riccardi First Violin



Dian Zhang First Violin



Leonid Igudesman First Violin



Jennifer Hsieh First Violin



Asuka Annie Yano First Violin



Jeremy Preston Principal Second Violin





Assistant Principal Second Violin



Eva Karasik Second Violin



Leslie Ludena Second Violin



Maya Cohon Second Violin



Craig Reiss Second Violin



Heeguen Song Second Violin Regular Substitute







Sergey Rakitchenkov Associate Principal Viola



Paul Nahhas Assistant Principal Viola Leave of Absence



Patricia Heller Viola



Jonna Hervig Viola





Viola



Joy Fellows Viola



Carla Maria Rodrigues

Viola Regular Substitute

Ruth Lane

Cello



David Kadarauch Principal Cello



Joseph Lescher Principal Bass



Peter Myers Assistant Principal Cello







Emil Miland Cello



Victoria Ehrlich Cello









Thalia Moore

Associate Principal

Cello

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ORCHESTRA CONTINUED



Jonathan Lancelle Associate Principal Bass



Steven D'Amico Assistant Principal



Shinji Eshima

Bass



Mark Drury Bass



Julie McKenzie Principal Flute



Flute



Stephanie McNab Flute & Piccolo



Barbara Chaffe Flute Regular Substitute



Mingjia Liu Principal Oboe



Gabriel Young Oboe



Janet Popesco Archibald Oboe & English Horn



Granero



Assistant Principal Clarinet



Anthony Striplen Clarinet & Bass Clarinet



Brian McCarty Horn



Rufus Olivier

Principal

William Klingelhoffer Horn Regular Substitute

David Ridge

Trombone &

Bass Trombone



Daniel MacNeill

Adam Luftman Principal Trumpet

Zachariah Spellman

Tuba/Cimbasso







Timpani

Richard Kvistad Principal Percussion & Associate Timpani



John Pearson Trumpet



Scott Macomber Trumpet Regular Substitute



Patricia Niemi Percussion



Keith Green

Horn

Samuel Schlosser Principal Trombone



Olga Ortenberg Rakitchenkov Harp





Tracy Davis Orchestra Manager











Bassoon &



Michael Severance





Kevin Rivard Co-Principal Horn





SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ORCHESTRA CONTINUED





Carrie Weick Librarian

Timothy Spears Assistant Orchestra Manager & Librarian

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

SAN FRAN ERAREGULAR CHORUS



Nadima Avakian Soprano



Kathleen Bayler Soprano



Sara Colburn Soprano



Dvora Djoraev Soprano



Mary Finch Soprano



Soprano



Elisabeth Rom Lucio Soprano



Angela Eden Moser Soprano



Rachelle Perry Soprano



15 Virginia Pluth Soprano



Carole Schaffer Soprano



Jesslyn Thomas Soprano



Soprano



Buffy Baggott Mezzo-Soprano



Elizabeth Baker Mezzo-Soprano





Claudia Haider Mezzo-Soprano





Sally Porter Munro Mezzo-Soprano





Porter Mezzo-Soprano



Daniel Harper Tenor



Laurel Rice Mezzo-Soprano Leave of Absence

58



Shelley Seitz Mezzo-Soprano



Donna Turchi Mezzo-Soprano



C. Michael Belle Tenor



Alan Cochran Tenor

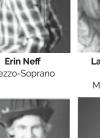






Chris Corley

Tenor





Janet Campbell Mezzo-Soprano





SAN FRANCISCO OPERA REGULAR CHORUS CONTINUED



Tenor



Phillip Pickens Tenor



Chester Pidduck Tenor



Colby Roberts Tenor



Sigmund Seigel Tenor



Andrew Truett Tenor



Richard Walker Tenor Leave of Absence



Bass



William Bryan

Baritone

William O'Neill Bass



William Pickersgill Bass

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



Baritone

Valery Portnov

Bass



David Kekuewa Baritone



Tenor



Jere Torkelsen Baritone





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Bel Canto Legacy Society member Brian Olson is an exuberant opera fan, fencer, and structural engineer who helped design the suspended catwalk at the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater in the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera. He became an opera fan in college after seeing *Salome* with a group of friends. "It was amazing! It was so easy to get caught up in the passion on stage, it felt *real*. I've never had that sort of connection to a performance before." Brian joined the Bel Canto Legacy Society "because the world is a rapidly changing place, and SF Opera is adapting to show that opera is still a vibrant, contemporary art form. I'm excited to see where this goes in my lifetime and want to help it continue on beyond that. Money is tight for almost everyone, which is where making a legacy gift can be a wonderful option. It's a way to support the Opera now even if your current finances are stretched. It helps the Opera know that there are people who want to support it and to plan for long-term projects. Opera productions aren't planned on a whim but are literally years in the making. Legacy gifts make the Opera part of your legacy and a part of the Opera's future."

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POSTLUDE

EMOTIONAL MEMORY AND OPERA

BY GENERAL DIRECTOR MATTHEW SHILVOCK

he children have said their prayers and fallen asleep in the forest; the angels have surrounded them to keep them safe; and the orchestra swells to a monumental moment of soaring emotion. In the dream sequence of *Hansel and Gretel*, Humperdinck opens a door of nostalgia to all that is good in childhood, reminding us of moments in our lives when we yearned to feel safe and protected.



This is one of those intangible moments of

magic in opera: a moment where something unlocks our emotional memory and we are invited into a complete synergy between what we're experiencing onstage and what we've experienced in our own life. Oftentimes these moments will be deeply personal: loves found and lost, difficult parental relationships, anguish at choices we must make. Interestingly, in our two final operas of the fall season, these moments of memory are deeply elemental, deeply private: our childhoods, in the case of *Hansel and Gretel*, and our first loves, in the case of *Manon Lescaut*. Both operas premiered in 1893 but, through emotional resonance, these works still invoke powerful personal memories for us now.

I am in awe at the connection between opera and memory. At San Francisco Opera we have 259 people who have been subscribing for 50 years or more, and when I talk with these dedicated, life-long opera lovers, it's amazing how almost everyone can remember their very first opera experience. People talk animatedly with photographic detail about specific performances from decades ago. Opera both unlocks personal memories and creates them at the same time.

There has been some wonderful writing in recent years on the connection between music and the brain, and music's unique ability to make and unlock neurological pathways. From Oliver Sacks' *Musicophilia* to Daniel Levitin's *This Is Your Brain on Music* to work by the San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Indre Viskontas—there is fascinating research being done on the power of music to affect us neurologically, physiologically, and emotionally. can have such resonance in memory. For me there are three key elements that come together in opera.

• The first is the human voice. Most of us are blessed with a voice, and so we can identify in a very real way with someone using the voice to convey emotion. As infants, we recognize the emotional cadence of the voice well before we understand the meaning of words. Opera singers may convey emotion at an Olympian-

level of virtuosity, but they're fundamentally doing what all of us do when we express emotion with our voices.

• The second is the abstraction of music. Music both engages our conscious thoughts and bypasses them, linking us to the deepest layers of our emotions and experiences.

• Thirdly, opera frames all of this in a dramatic narrative—a scaffold that enables us to weave our experiences and identities with those of the characters onstage. A great symphony can unlock powerful emotions, but a great opera allows us to clothe those emotions in personal stories.

Memory and experience are unique to each of us, and each of us will resonate differently with different operas onstage. Different operas can unlock different reactions at different points in our lives. But to know that, amidst a group of thousands of people, we can have these moments of personal resonance is quite extraordinary. Opera invites us to a place of vulnerability and openness with ourselves. It invites us to visit deep places in our own life stories. And, with a work of such nostalgia as *Hansel and Gretel*, it invites us to go all the way back into childhood and connect our current selves with our origins.

I encourage you to think about your own connections of opera and memory—moments onstage that have unlocked something very personal for you. And, if this is your first opera, I am excited to welcome you here and hope that you might experience something of that extraordinary connectivity during this performance.

I've often wondered why opera is so affecting and how it

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