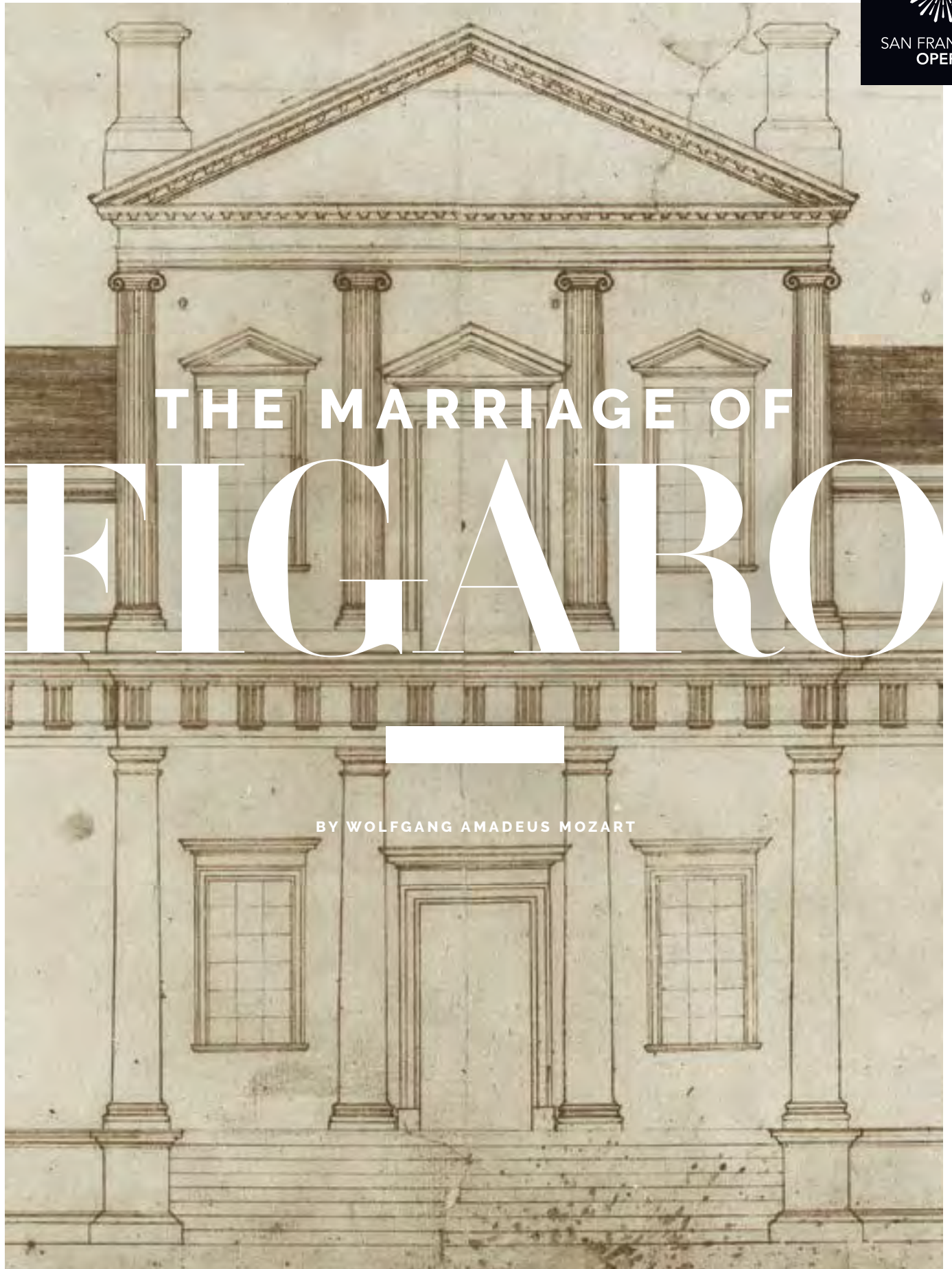


OCTOBER 11-NOVEMBER 1, 2019



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THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

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Adam Snellings, *Art Direction*
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Cover illustration: The curtain for *The Marriage of Figaro* is based on Thomas Jefferson's 1771 elevation study for Monticello.

FEATURES

31 **DESIGNING THE CLOTHES FOR FIGARO**
BY CONSTANCE HOFFMAN
Research into the styles of dress and fabrics worn in early American life give the garments for San Francisco Opera's new production an authentic, period flair.

32 **THE MOZART / DA PONTE TRILOGY**
Explore the three operas by Mozart and Da Ponte with San Francisco Opera and director Michael Cavanagh now through the 2021–22 Season.

37 **REVOLUTIONARY PARTNERSHIP: MOZART & DA PONTE IN VIENNA** BY PAUL THOMASON
A scandalous French play provided Mozart and Da Ponte with the inspiration for *The Marriage of Figaro*, the first collaboration in what would become a historic partnership.

40 **DIRECTOR'S NOTE** BY MICHAEL CAVANAGH
The Canadian director envisions a post-Revolutionary War American household as the perfect setting for *Figaro*.

41 **THE MORE THINGS CHANGE: MAKING FIGARO'S MEANING** BY MARK BUFORD
Composed against the backdrop of three epoch-defining revolutions, *The Marriage of Figaro* continues to thrill audiences and pose the question: What kind of world do we want to live in?

LEARN ABOUT

- | | |
|--|---|
| 9 San Francisco Opera Association | 34 Synopsis |
| 12 Welcome Message from the Board | 35 Cast |
| 15 San Francisco Opera News | 44 Artist Profiles |
| 16 Opera Ball | 51 Diversity on Stage |
| 19 Opera in the Park | 60 San Francisco Opera Donors |
| 20 Opera at the Ballpark | 78 Postlude by General Director Matthew Shilcock |

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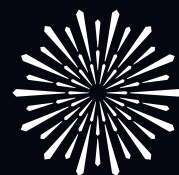
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 BY BENJAMIN BRITTEN



THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO
 OCT 11, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 27; NOV 1
 BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART



MANON LESCAUT
 NOV 8, 13, 16, 20, 24, 26
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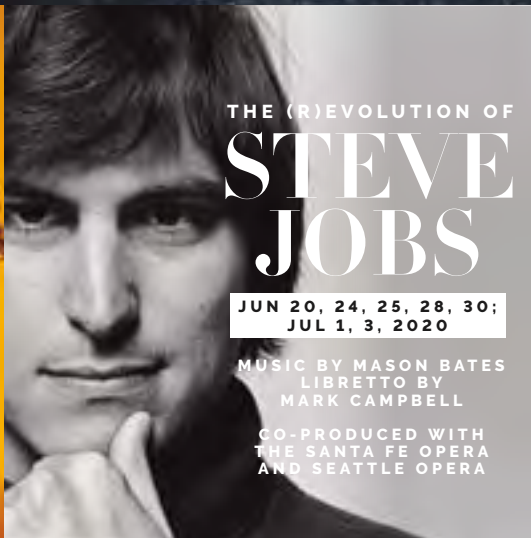
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 JUN 7, 13, 16, 19, 26; JUL 2, 2020
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A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

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.

In October, we eagerly anticipate the premiere of San Francisco Opera's new production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. This is our first new production of

Figaro in more than thirty years and the first installment of a new staging of the complete trilogy of the Mozart/Da Ponte operas by acclaimed director Michael Cavanagh. We are delighted to welcome back Maestro Henrik Nánási after his triumphant 2017 San Francisco Opera debut in *Elektra* and to greet a stellar cast of house debuts.

As you will read in the pages of this magazine, our production of *Figaro* is part of General Director Matthew Shilvock's plan to refresh the core works in San Francisco Opera's repertory. We call these new stagings "Legacy Productions," created especially for our theater and our audiences and designed to stand the test of time. Legacy Productions are an important part of San Francisco Opera's goal to engage our longtime subscribers and donors while simultaneously exciting and inspiring those who are new to opera.

This season is made possible by our talented guest artists, orchestra, chorus, dance corps, staff, and crew who collaborate to create the uniquely compelling art form that is opera. It is also made possible by you, our patrons and donors, whose support keeps San Francisco Opera at the forefront of opera companies worldwide. We extend special thanks to our Company Sponsors, whose names are listed on page 60, for their extraordinary support.



Keith B. Geeslin and John A. Gunn

DREW ALTIZER

Thank you for joining us and enjoy the season!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith B. Geeslin".

Keith B. Geeslin
President

San Francisco Opera Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Gunn".

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA NEWS



THE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CHORUS IN CONCERT, NOVEMBER 22

The San Francisco Opera Chorus has given some breathtaking performances already this season in two “big-sing” operas. Ready for more? Along with being featured in *The Marriage of Figaro* and November’s *Manon Lescaut*, the acclaimed ensemble will command the spotlight on November 22 in a special all-choral program in the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater. Maestro Ian Robertson, now in his 32nd season as San Francisco Opera Chorus Director, leads the chorus in excerpts from Verdi’s *Ernani*, Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin*, Berlioz’s *Benvenuto Cellini*, and other choral works with accompaniment by Fabrizio Corona. Tickets and more information available at sfopera.com/chorusconcert.

RICHARD TUCKER AWARD WINNERS ON STAGE AT THE WAR MEMORIAL

This month, 2019 Richard Tucker Award winner, soprano Lisette Oropesa, is featured in the annual Richard Tucker Gala at Carnegie Hall on October 27 and appears in the title role of Massenet’s *Manon* at the Metropolitan Opera. San Francisco Opera fans will remember the New Orleans artist’s thrilling local appearances as Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Nannetta in *Falstaff*, and Romilda in Handel’s *Xerxes*. Congratulations, Lisette Oropesa!

Several recent Tucker Award winners have held the spotlight on the War Memorial Opera House stage in recent months. Bass-baritone Christian Van Horn (2018 winner) and soprano Nadine Sierra (2017) starred last month in *Billy Budd* and *Romeo and Juliet*, respectively. Last summer, mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton (2015) and Brandon Jovanovich (2007) performed in five unforgettable performances of Dvořák’s *Rusalka* and tenor Matthew Polenzani (2004) was a passionate Don José in *Carmen*.

Given annually by conferral rather than audition to an American singer poised for a major national and international career, the Richard Tucker Award is one of opera’s most prestigious honors. Past recipients include many of the finest lyric artists of the past four decades. The award’s namesake, celebrated American tenor Richard Tucker, was a featured artist with San Francisco Opera between 1954 and 1965. More information at richardtucker.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

The collaboration between Mozart and Lorenzo Da Ponte resulted in three great operas. Thanks to a rediscovered manuscript in Prague, a fourth musical intersection for the two has recently come to light! Jointly composed by Mozart, Antonio Salieri, and a musician named Cornetti to a text by Da Ponte, “Per la Ricuperata Salute di Ofelia” is a four-minute-long cantata celebrating the recovery from illness of soprano Nancy Storace. One year after the composition’s performance, Storace became the first Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The first performance of *The Marriage of Figaro* occurred in Vienna on May 1, 1786. A few weeks earlier—and on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean—Columbia College (now Columbia University) graduated its first class of eight students. Lorenzo da Ponte, many years after his triumphant collaboration with Mozart, fled Europe for the New World and found employment as an Italian literature professor ... at Columbia!

The Marriage of Figaro was such a success in Prague that when Mozart and Da Ponte’s *Don Giovanni* had its world premiere there two years later, the composer couldn’t resist quoting his earlier hit in the new score. The melody of Figaro’s Act I aria, “Non più andrai,” is sung playfully by Leporello in the climactic banquet scene of *Don Giovanni*.

San Francisco Opera founder Gaetano Merola rarely conducted the music of Mozart. Consequently, it was not until 1936 that one of the composer’s operas, *The Marriage of Figaro*, entered the Company’s repertory—thirteen years after the inaugural season. Richard Lert conducted.

Also in 1786: Mission Santa Barbara—later known as the “Queen of the Missions” is founded in Santa Barbara, California; American frontiersman Davy Crockett and German composer Carl Maria von Weber are born.

Music from *The Marriage of Figaro* has been heard in many films, including the memorable scene in *The Shawshank Redemption* when inmate Andy Dufresne broadcasts the duet for Susanna and the Countess, “Sull’aria ... Che soave zeffiretto,” over the prison PA system.



Jane Mudge,
Elizabeth Birka-White



Abbi Schreck,
Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen



Matthew and Kate Shilvock

ON THE SCENE

OPERA BALL 2019

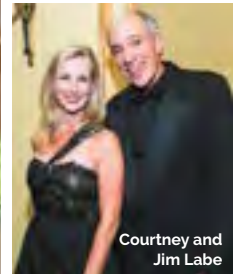
On September 6, San Francisco Opera held its most glamorous night of the year, opening its 97th season with Charles Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* and a masquerade-inspired celebration. This year's Opera Ball took *The Capulets' Masked Ball* as its theme, and Bay Area style icons rose to the challenge, bringing high fashion to Renaissance Verona. Proceeds from the night benefitted the San Francisco Opera Guild and its outreach efforts across Northern California, offering arts education to 64,000 students each year.



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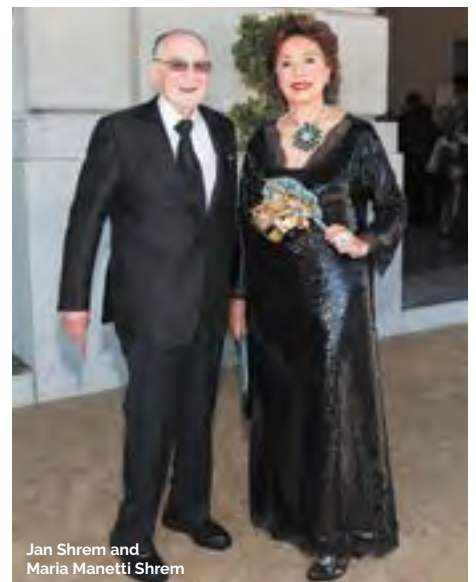
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ON THE SCENE

OPERA IN THE PARK 2019

The kick-off to San Francisco Opera's 97th season concluded with a Bay Area tradition: the annual outdoor concert *Opera in the Park*. On September 8, thousands of attendees packed the slopes of Robin Williams Meadow at Golden Gate Park to hear the free performance, featuring stars like Pene Pati, Amina Edris, Christian Van Horn, and John Chest. The program included a mix of operatic favorites—from composers as renowned as Mozart and Handel—as well as pop classics like Queen's 1976 rock hit "Somebody to Love."



Pene Pati,
Matthew Shilcock



Charlotte
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ON THE SCENE

OPERA AT THE BALLPARK 2019

One of San Francisco Opera's most beloved community events, *Opera at the Ballpark* returned on September 21 when *Romeo and Juliet* was transmitted live from the stage of the War Memorial Opera House to Oracle Park's massive, new 71' x 153' videoboard. Presented in partnership with the San Francisco Giants, the free simulcast attracted a large and enthusiastic audience who laid blankets on the field and sat in the stands to experience Gounod's romantic opera.



Romeo and Juliet's Pene Pati and Nadine Sierra appeared in Giants gear for the final bows.
PHOTO BY SCOTT WALL



Matthew Shilvock with Leberta Lorál, who sang the National Anthem.





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TERRENCE MCCARTHY

Once again, the unprecedented generosity of Cynthia and John Gunn has set the stage for a dazzling season at San Francisco Opera. Since 2002, when John joined the Opera Board, the couple has underwritten numerous productions and provided exceptional support for many of the company's innovative endeavors. In September 2008, the Gunns made a historic commitment—believed to be the largest gift ever made by individuals to an American opera company—to help fund the signature projects of General Director David Gockley, including new operas and productions, multimedia projects, and outreach programs, and 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 Jobs*. 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 Cynthia, who graduated from Stanford with an A.B. in political science in 1970. Early in her career, Cynthia was the editor and director of The Portable Stanford book series for ten years. She edited twenty-eight books by Stanford professors on a vast array of topics, including *Economic Policy Beyond the Headlines* by George Shultz and Ken Dam. In addition to their support of San Francisco Opera, the Gunns are active members of the community. John 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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Broadway Cast, 2019. Photo: Matt Murphy

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Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for New Productions (Production Sponsor, *The Marriage of Figaro*)

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 *The Marriage of Figaro* 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*.



JIM HUGHES PHOTOGRAPHY

Koret Foundation (Production Sponsor, *The Marriage of Figaro*)

San Francisco Opera is deeply grateful to Koret Foundation for its support of *The Marriage of Figaro*. This support is part of the Foundation's new Arts and Culture Initiative, which funds bold ideas that help build the next generation of artists and art enthusiasts.

Koret's three-year grant supports the revival and restaging of classical operas including last season's *Tosca* and next season's *Così fan tutte*. "The Opera and Koret Foundation have a valued partnership that goes back many years," says General Director Matthew Shilvock, "and we look forward to continuing to celebrate the critical role that Koret plays in enabling thrilling artistic endeavors."

"We are excited to partner with San Francisco Opera as they continue to produce world-class productions that enrich and inspire our entire community," says Jeffrey A. Farber, Koret Foundation CEO.

JAN SHREM & MARIA MANETTI SHREM

As Jan Shrem explains, “For Maria, it is all about the artists. Though I had loved opera for years before I met her, it was Maria who opened my eyes to the dedication and sacrifice of the artists.” 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



DREW ALTIZER

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

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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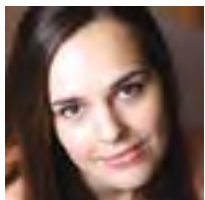
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DESIGNING THE CLOTHES FOR FIGARO

When we started talking about approaching the three Mozart and Da Ponte operas as a connected trilogy a few years ago, Michael Cavanagh already knew that he wanted to link them by setting them in a house which would change over the course of three centuries: the late 18th, the mid 20th and the end of the 21st. *Figaro* would be first, set in 1786, when the opera premiered, and the house was just being completed. As we discussed where this house would be, we began to think about the fledgling United States after the Revolutionary War, struggling towards a draft of the Constitution. It was a period of optimism, idealism, and troubling compromises, which continue to reverberate in our country to this day. We decided that the house would be near Philadelphia, the cultural and political center of the new Republic, in a state that was a leader in its egalitarian principles at that time.

American clothes in the 1790's were a fascinating mixture of social cues, often communicating conflicting messages as Euro-Americans mixed with established Colonists of all classes, and exuberant French fashions collided with Quaker restraint and republican simplicity. Increased prosperity and access to imported textiles blurred the distinctions between backgrounds and classes, as servants and masters could dress more and more alike.

The costume design for *Figaro* explores these ambiguities, as *Figaro* and Susanna's independence in the new world challenges Almaviva's old world assumptions. *Figaro* dons a vivid silk wedding waistcoat to rival Almaviva's finery, and Susanna and Rosina exchange clothes with one another, derailing Almaviva's ability to identify his servant by her dress.

In *Figaro*, the clothes are meant to feel quite real, capturing the late 18th-century in closely observed human detail. Fabrics for the costumes have been gathered from New York, London, and Europe in an effort to capture the texture and weight of 18th century clothes.

Once constructed by the drapers and stitchers in the costume department, the clothes are then gently aged by the fabric painter so that they feel lived in and used. Every chorus member is designed as an individual, with a specific task in the house.



Constance Hoffman and her costume designs for *The Marriage of Figaro*.

MATTHEW WASHBURN/SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

In *Così fan tutte*, we will find ourselves in the late 1930's and the house has been re-purposed to become a health spa. The lovers are upper class, insulated from the Great Depression by their wealth. Their clothes are chic and playful, a counterpoint to the painful emotional stakes that Don Alfonso's wager sets up.

In *Don Giovanni*, we jump into the near future of 2090, a ruined landscape in which unbridled appetites have destroyed the house. Wealth and power belong to the few, and the rest eke out an existence by scavenging and re-using whatever they can find in the rubble. The tattered remains of 18th- and 20th-century clothes from *Figaro* and *Così* will be visible, pulled from the past and mixed into a vision of the future made up of the remnants of our collective history as a country.

In approaching the costume design for these three very different stories set in three eras in the same American house, I decided to link the designs through a controlled palette; I limited the colors to variations on red, white, and blue, in a meditation on the colors of our United States and the state of our democracy from its inception, through the past two centuries and into an imagined future. ❁

THE MOZART / DA PONTE

TRILLOGY

This new production of *The Marriage of Figaro* marks the beginning of an exciting new project for San Francisco Opera. Through three of the most humanistic operas ever written, we will explore issues of how humans live together, the forms of society they establish, and the loves, hopes, and conflicts that result. In a unique new conception by Michael Cavanagh, we will be joining the three operas of Mozart and Da Ponte into a holistic trilogy, bound together by common themes but also an American house in which a 300-year span of human society plays out. Here, and on page 40, Cavanagh shares a glimpse of what is to come in future seasons, along with some preliminary design renderings by set designer Erhard Rom.



1

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO OCTOBER 2019

The Marriage of Figaro, is all about new beginnings, hope, and possibility. The time period is its intended one, the late 18th century. We are somewhere in the heart of a post-revolutionary America in a world of vast possibility for some, but great resentment and resistance for others. It is a house and a nation under construction, representing a hopeful future in which people strive to express their individual freedom within a framework of responsibility to each other.

2

COSÌ FAN TUTTE 2020-2021 SEASON

Così fan tutte belongs in the middle because it's about people and society at a crossroads. The location is the same but the times have changed enormously. It's 150 years later, the late 1930s, and the house has changed and is repurposed as a country club. America is searching for its identity, emerging from the Great Depression and with the winds of war swirling around Europe. At the country club, toying with each other as they dally and delay, are people at important junctions of their lives as well. The decisions they make for themselves and each other will inform their lives forever, just as the nation itself will soon be forever altered.



3

DON GIOVANNI 2021-2022 SEASON

There is a sense of relentless inevitability and conclusion, evident even in the opening chords of *Don Giovanni*. The themes of personal freedom and collective responsibility are taken to their extremes. Time has again moved 150 years ahead, into the 2080s, a grim and not-so-distant future. The house is but a shell of its former self, in a dystopian world following some kind of calamity. The inhabitants that remain struggle to make their way. But still, wrongs will be redressed in this cautionary tale. Actions have consequences, in personal life, in society, in the world. But with the conclusion of the opera comes renewal. Society will endure.

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

OPERA IN FOUR ACTS BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

LIBRETTO BY LORENZO DA PONTE

BASED ON THE COMEDY BY PIERRE-AUGUSTIN CARON DE BEAUMARCHAIS

This production is made possible, in part, by
John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn,
the Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for New Productions,
Koret Foundation, and the Thomas Tilton Production Fund.

Jeanine De Bique, Serena Malfi, Levente Molnár, and Michael Sumuel's
appearances are made possible by
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Henrik Nánási's appearance is made possible by
the Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem Conductors Fund.

Additional funding is provided by
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OCTOBER 11, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 27; NOVEMBER 1, 2019

The performance will last approximately 3 hours and 40 minutes including two intermissions.

San Francisco Opera New Production



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

ACT I

At a magnificent, newly constructed estate, the valet Figaro and his fiancée, the maid Susanna, prepare for their wedding. But Susanna shocks Figaro by revealing that the head of the household, Count Almaviva, plans to seduce her. In another part of the new house, a lawyer, Bartolo, vows vengeance against Figaro for a long-held grudge. His companion, the housekeeper Marcellina, wants Figaro to marry her to cancel a loan he cannot repay. Almaviva barges in, furious at having caught his young page Cherubino flirting with the gardener's daughter, Barbarina. Almaviva's attentions, however, shift when he sees Susanna—only to snap back again when he discovers his flirtatious page hiding in the same room. Hoping to derail Almaviva's designs on Susanna, Figaro pressures him to hold their wedding that very day. Almaviva reluctantly agrees, but he takes his anger out on the page Cherubino, banishing him to the military.

—INTERMISSION—

ACT II

The Countess Rosina plots to chasten her husband's infidelity, with assistance from Figaro and Susanna. Cherubino, smitten with Rosina, agrees to help. The two women disguise Cherubino as Susanna, in order to lure Almaviva into a romantic tryst. Susanna leaves to find a ribbon for the disguise, only for Almaviva himself to arrive. Cherubino quickly hides in a closet. Almaviva, however, hears noise coming from the closet and doubts Rosina's claim that Susanna is inside. He takes his wife to fetch tools with which to open the locked closet. Meanwhile, Susanna, having observed everything, urges Cherubino to come out. Cherubino leaps from the window to escape, and Susanna takes his place in the closet. Both Almaviva and Rosina are amazed to find her there upon their return. All seems well until the gardener storms in with crushed geraniums from the flower bed below the window. Figaro, who has run in to announce that the wedding is ready, contends it was he who jumped from the window and feigns a sprained ankle. Marcellina, Bartolo, and the music teacher Basilio enter waving a court summons for Figaro, which allows the lecherous Almaviva to delay the wedding.

—INTERMISSION—

ACT III

As everyone assembles for Figaro's hearing, Barbarina dresses the banished Cherubino as a girl to hide him from Almaviva. The trial concludes with Figaro sentenced to marry Marcellina—unless he pays off his debt.

They soon discover, however, that Figaro is actually the love child of Bartolo and Marcellina herself. Susanna enters with money to resolve Figaro's debt, and the two couples marry in a double wedding. Susanna, having plotted with Rosina to trap her cheating husband, slips Almaviva a note. It summons him to the garden that evening. They seal it with a pin which Almaviva is to return to Susanna.

ACT IV

Later that night, Barbarina has dropped the pin that Almaviva asked her to return to Susanna. Hearing this, Figaro believes the pin to be a token of love and that Susanna has betrayed him. Susanna and Rosina arrive in disguise, having swapped clothes to deceive Almaviva. Susanna conceals herself in the bushes, while Almaviva chases away Cherubino to have the woman he assumes to be Susanna all to himself. A jealous Figaro attempts to enlist the aid of the supposed Rosina, but he quickly realizes from her voice that she is, in fact, Susanna. Almaviva, having lost the fake Susanna, re-enters to see Figaro performing an exaggerated love scene with the woman he believes to be his wife. Thinking Rosina has betrayed him, Almaviva furiously calls everyone to witness her disgrace. He refuses all pleas for pardon, until the real Rosina appears and the ruse is revealed. Grasping the truth at last, Almaviva begs his wife's forgiveness. She agrees, and the entire household celebrates the dawning of an era of hope and possibility in their new home.

First performance: Vienna, Burgtheater, May 1, 1786, with the composer conducting.

First performance in the United States: New York, Park Theatre, May 10, 1824, in Bishop's English-language version.

First San Francisco Opera performance: November 9, 1936. *Le Nozze di Figaro* has been performed in 18 previous seasons at San Francisco Opera. For complete information on all past casts and productions, visit archive.sfopera.com.

Orchestra: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 1 timpani, 1 fortepiano, 31 strings (10 first violins, 8 second violins, 6 violas, 4 cellos, 3 basses); **45 total.**

Personnel: 13 principals, 24 chorus; **37 total.**

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

(LE NOZZE DI FIGARO)

(Sung in Italian with English supertitles)

Conductor

Henrik Nánási

Director

Michael Cavanagh

Set Designer

Erhard Rom

Costume Designer

Constance Hoffman

Lighting Designer

Jane Cox*

Choreographer

Lawrence Pech

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Assistant Conductor

William Long

Prompter

Robert Mollicone

Fortepiano Continuo

Bryndon Hassman

Musical Preparation

Bryndon Hassman

Ronny Michael Greenberg

César Cañón†

John Churchwell

Fabrizio Corona

Diction

Alessandra Cattani

Supertitles

Clifford Cranna

Assistant Director

Roy Rallo

Stage Manager

Thea Railey

Assistant Stage Managers

Andrew G. Landis

Jimmy Marcheso

Jayne O'Hara

Costume Supervisor

Galen Till

Wig and Makeup

Jeanna Parham

CAST

(in order of vocal appearance)

<i>Figaro</i>	Michael Sumuel
<i>Susanna</i>	Jeanine De Bique*
<i>Bartolo</i>	James Creswell
<i>Marcellina</i>	Catherine Cook
<i>Cherubino</i>	Serena Malfi*
<i>Almaviva, the Count</i>	Levente Molnár*
<i>Basilio</i>	Greg Fedderly
<i>Rosina, the Countess</i>	Nicole Heaston*
<i>Antonio</i>	Bojan Knežević
<i>Curzio</i>	Brenton Ryan
<i>Barbarina</i>	Natalie Image†
<i>Bridesmaids</i>	Jesslyn Thomas
	Laurel Cameron Porter
<i>Servants, Laborers, and Staff of the Household.</i>	

* San Francisco Opera debut † Current Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: *Late 18th Century, Post-Revolutionary Times.
The Almaviva Estate, under construction, Mid-Atlantic United States.*

ACT I: Rooms and Hallways of the Estate

—INTERMISSION—

ACT II: Rosina's Bedroom

—INTERMISSION—

ACT III: Rooms and Hallways of the Estate

ACT IV: The Garden of the Estate

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

REVOLUTIONARY PARTNERSHIP MOZART & DA PONTE IN VIENNA

BY PAUL THOMASON



Lorenzo Da Ponte
ALAMY IMAGES

On May 7th, 1783 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote to his father from Vienna: “Our poet here is now a certain Abbate da Ponte. He has an enormous amount to do in revising pieces for the theater and he has to write *per obbligo* an entirely new libretto for Salieri, which will take him two months. He has promised after that to write a new libretto for me. But who knows whether he will be able to keep his word—or will want to? For, as you are aware, these Italian gentlemen are very civil to your face. Enough, we know them! If he is in league with Salieri, I shall never get anything out of him.”

Exactly when Mozart met Lorenzo Da Ponte, the man with whom he would collaborate on three of the greatest operas ever written, seems to be unknown. In his thoroughly entertaining but often factually suspect *Memoirs*, Da Ponte said they met at the house of Baron Raimund Wetzlar. That would make a lot of sense. Wetzlar was an admirer of Mozart’s, the godfather to the composer’s first child, and for a while Mozart’s landlord. As a wealthy, cultured Viennese he would certainly be on good terms with people involved with the court theater. But it was two years after Mozart’s letter to his father before the promised libretto appeared.

Da Ponte had arrived in Vienna in 1781, the same year Mozart rather abruptly left the service of Prince-Archbishop Colloredo of Salzburg and suddenly found himself a freelance musician in the Imperial city. His Italian opera *Idomeneo* had been well received at its premiere in Munich on January 29, 1781, so Mozart, naturally, wanted to write an opera for Vienna. The following year he had a huge success with *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*) a singspiel (a play with songs) that spread his name throughout German speaking countries. But then in 1783 the emperor, Joseph II, turned his attention from German opera and revived the Italian opera, making Da Ponte poet to the court theater.

Mozart needed an Italian libretto. “I have looked through at least a hundred libretti and more, but I have hardly found a single one with which I am satisfied,” he wrote to his

father. Understandably he tried Giovanni Battista Varesco, the librettist for *Idomeneo*, but after working a few months on Varesco’s *L’Oca del Cairo* (*The Goose of Cairo*) Mozart abandoned it in early 1784. During the same period Mozart toyed with *Lo Sposo Deluso* (*The Deluded Bridegroom*), even making some notations about singers from the Italian company in the libretto, but he soon abandoned that, as well.

Exactly when Mozart and Da Ponte finally decided to collaborate we don’t know. Da Ponte said he made the suggestion they write an opera together, but that it was Mozart who suggested turning Beaumarchais’ latest play *La Folle Journée, ou Le Mariage de Figaro* into an opera. It was an utterly inspired idea in some ways—and an almost ludicrous one in others.

Emanuel Schikaneder—who would later write the libretto for Mozart’s last opera, *The Magic Flute*, and create the character of Papageno—wanted to give Beaumarchais’ play in German translation at the Kärntnertor Theater of which he was the director. But the Emperor banned it “since this piece contains much that is objectionable.” However he did allow its publication. Still, having banned the play would it be likely the Emperor would allow its operatic version to be staged? Mozart and Da Ponte were taking an enormous risk. They were writing it on spec, not on commission, and since there was no guarantee the Emperor would allow the opera to be given, they might never see any money from the project. (In the end, Mozart received 450 florins from the theater for *Figaro*; Da Ponte, 200.)

On the plus side were several factors. The play itself was a topic of conversation in Vienna. Even more promising was the fact that Paisiello’s opera *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, based on Beaumarchais’ earlier play, was a smash hit in Vienna when the new Italian company gave it on August 13, 1783. So the characters were known—and popular—with the Viennese public.

The Marriage of Figaro was very much a contemporary opera. Beaumarchais’ play had finally been given in Paris in 1784, after having been banned for some time. It concerns real people—not the mythological figures and emperors of the older *opera seria*.

It makes the case for the dignity of common people, even going so far, on occasion, as to show them superior to their aristocratic masters—a reflection of the social unrest stirring Europe at the time. It was obviously a play that resonated with both Da Ponte and Mozart personally. In one of the letters Mozart wrote his father in 1781, explaining why he could not return to the service of Archbishop Colloredo, Mozart used words that Beaumarchais could easily have put into Figaro's mouth: "It is the heart that ennobles a man; and though I am no count, yet I have probably more honor in me than many a count. Whether a man be a count or a valet, if he insults me, he is a scoundrel."

"Where in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* there was an essentially benevolent insolence lurking beneath the comedy, in *Figaro* there is a positively dangerous spirit of revolution," conductor Jane Glover aptly notes in her marvelous book *Mozart's Women*. Da Ponte was masterful in adapting the play in such a way that the most flagrant political expression was deleted, while retaining the conflict between the characters and classes, as well as a good deal of the provocative atmosphere of the day.

Since Mozart and Da Ponte both lived in Vienna we have no letters between them, no actual evidence of how they worked

three operas ready to be put in production: "One by Vincenzo Righini, one by Salieri ('The Grotto of Trophonius'), and one by Mozart ... and each composer claimed the right of producing his opera for the first. The contest raised much discord, and parties were formed. The characters of the three men were all very different. Mozart was as touchy as gunpowder, and swore he would put the score of his opera into the fire if it were not produced first. Righini was working like a mole in the dark to get precedence. [Salieri was] a clever, shrewd man, possessed of what Bacon called crooked wisdom: and his claims were backed by three of the principal performers, who formed a cabal not easily put down. Every one in the opera company took part in the contest, I alone was a stickler for Mozart ... The mighty contest was put an end by His Majesty issuing a mandate for Mozart's 'Nozze di Figaro' to be instantly put into rehearsal."

Da Ponte claims that he went personally to the Emperor and informed him of the opera he and Mozart had written. He relates word for word (albeit decades later) the conversation in which he gradually overcame the Emperor's objections to the subject. But cabals against *Figaro* continued during rehearsals.

While most of the audience seemed delighted at the pre-

"As fast as I wrote the words, Mozart set them to music."

—LORENZO DA PONTE

together. What did they argue over? What did Mozart demand of his librettist? What did Da Ponte dig his heels in about? We simply don't know. Decades later Da Ponte claimed, "As fast as I wrote the words, Mozart set them to music. In six weeks everything was in order." Which might or might not be true. We know they were at work on the project by November 1785 because Mozart's father referred to it in a letter he wrote his daughter: "I've finally received a letter from your brother, it's dated 2 November and is all of 12 lines long ... he's up to his eyes in work on his opera *Le Nozze di Figaro* ... I know the piece, it's a very tiresome play and the translation from the French will certainly have to be changed if it's to be effective as an opera." Mozart entered the opera in his thematic catalogue on April 29, 1786, traditionally the date he wrote the overture, which is certainly more than six weeks from the beginning of November. But since the opera premiered two days later, most of it had to have been written considerably earlier.

As it happened, just as they were finishing *Figaro*, the theater suddenly needed a new opera. Irish tenor Michael Kelly was a member of the company and created the roles of Basilio and Don Curzio in *Figaro*. He was a friend of Mozart's and his *Reminiscences* (written long after the events) give a marvelous look into the Vienna of Mozart's time. According to Kelly, there were

miere on May 1st, 1786, others were not, finding the music too new to truly understand (a not uncommon Viennese reaction to Mozart's music at the time). Michael Kelly wrote, "Never was any thing more complete than the triumph of Mozart and his 'Nozze di Figaro.'" So many of the numbers had to be repeated that the performance lasted almost twice as long as planned. After the third performance the Emperor issued a ban on encores of anything except solo arias because performances were simply lasting too long. Even so, there were only nine performances in Vienna that year, and it was not revived there until 1789 when it notched twenty-six performances, leading to the commission of *Così fan tutte*.

Some critics have called *Le Nozze di Figaro* the most perfect opera ever written. In *Mozart's Women*, Glover sums it up brilliantly: "For all the stirring portrayals of character in the works of Mozart's predecessors and contemporaries, even indeed in his own operas, nothing before had ever discovered such astonishing depth of veracity. Between them, Mozart and Da Ponte had finally held the mirror up to the audience: 'This,' they were saying, 'is all about you.'" 🌟

Writer, lecturer, and teacher Paul Thomason is currently writing a book on the music of Richard Strauss.



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THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

The narrative structure of beginning, middle, and end is as old as storytelling itself. Human beings have always loved tales that establish a situation, develop it with conflicts and complications, then resolve it for better or worse. The three operas of W. A. Mozart and Lorenzo Da Ponte are complex, profound, and intensely personal. They align with this structure in a way that is not only entertaining but illuminating.

We yearn for personal fulfillment, and at the same time strive to connect and collaborate with our fellow human beings. Sometimes this duality is in perfect harmony, at other times it is in direct conflict. Where better to set intimate, personal entanglements than a household, and where better to examine the struggle of public responsibility versus private fulfillment than the great social experiment that is The United States of America?

Imagine a great house that is built just after a revolution, finds its feet just as a society's grounds are shifting, and then falls into ruin, serving as a refuge for the survivors of a bleak and uncertain future. Imagine, too, that within the walls of this place are hopeful, passionate, desperate, and determined people, young and old. They love, they hurt, and they persist. This illustrates perfectly the push and pull of human life. We strive to live freely for ourselves while giving to, and taking from, others with whom we share this journey.

This, then, is the Great American House of Mozart and Da Ponte. We will present these three masterworks as paragons of this narrative arc, a trilogy as epic in scope as the entirety of America and as deeply personal as the hopes and desires of every individual within it.

We begin with *The Marriage of Figaro*, which is all about new beginnings, hope and possibility. The time period is its original one, the late 18th century. The location is unsp-

cific, somewhere near the heart of a brand-new America. This is a post-revolutionary time and place, a world of vast possibility for some, but great resentment and resistance for others. It is a house and a nation under construction, representing a hopeful future in which people strive to express their individual freedom within a framework of responsibility to each other.

A house is a place for people to live, and this house is one where modes of living themselves are also under construction. These are all new Americans (as is virtually every American citizen, at one point or another) and they are gathered in this new space, in this new society, to figure out

**“We strive to live
freely for ourselves
while giving to, and
taking from, others
with whom we
share this journey.”**

how to co-exist for better or for worse. Some, like Susanna and Figaro, are determined to carve out a fresh identity, to use this emerging culture to establish new customs and go forward into a bright and boundless future. Others like Almaviva and Bartolo want nothing more than to cling to the status quo, to resist change and retain all the privileges of their old positions. Still others, like the Countess Rosina and, indeed, so many of us, are deeply conflicted, torn between a

wish for a more hopeful, progressive world and a nostalgia for a bygone era that seems—through the gauze of memory—to have been a simpler, better time.

In the building of any great enterprise, like the creation of a magnificent estate, or the establishment of a boldly ambitious nation, or even the outset of a marriage between two soulmates, mistakes and missteps will be made. People can be hurt, dreams quashed, and treasured ways of life altered forever. But that's the price of progress, for every human heart as well as our collective soul. We win some, and we learn some.

If you listen to Mozart and Da Ponte, you will learn a lot. ❁



Philippe Sly as Figaro and
Lisette Oropesa as Susanna in
Act IV of *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

CORY WEAVER / SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ARCHIVES

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE MAKING FIGARO'S MEANING

BY MARK BURFORD

Recalling the process of turning playwright Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais' recent hit *The Marriage of Figaro* into a libretto for Mozart, Lorenzo Da Ponte acknowledged: "I did not make a translation of this excellent comedy, but rather an adaptation or, let us say, an extract." If so, how should we make sense of an extract from a French play set in Andalusian Spain that is adapted as Italian opera for an Austrian imperial court and subsequently relocated by a Canadian director to postcolonial America for a twenty-

first-century San Francisco audience? What is preserved and what is transformed—what is lost and what is found—in this transatlantic game of telephone unfolding over the course of two and a half centuries?

A sequel to *The Barber of Seville*, *The Marriage of Figaro* (subtitled *The Mad Day*) was second in a series of three Beaumarchais comedies about Castilian nobleman Count Almaviva and his resourceful, quick-witted valet Figaro. Representing the master-servant relationship as more confrontational than complementary, the play consciously

rebuked the arbitrariness of authoritarian power. In Act I of the opera, Figaro throws down this gauntlet in the aria “Se vuol ballare,” promising to “school” the Count on who really calls the tune. No wonder some contemporaries perceived Beaumarchais’ takedown of nobles and magistrates as signaling “the end of the old order.” It was Mozart’s idea to remake *Figaro* as an opera, a vision that struck the composer with notable immediacy and was executed with breathless efficiency. Beaumarchais completed the play by 1778, but after protracted haggling with King Louis XVI’s censors over its politically subversive message—setting it in Spain instead of France was one concession—it was not publicly performed until 1784. By November of the following year, Mozart’s father Leopold reported that his son was already “up to the eyes” composing the score for *Le Nozze di Figaro*, which premiered at Vienna’s Burgtheater on May 1, 1786, a mere two years after the play’s debut. Beaumarchais’ critique of licentious privilege was resonant across

ess—Almaviva’s neglected wife, Rosina—and the page boy, Cherubino, a hormonal teenager cast in both the play and the opera as a woman in a “trouser role.” The physical gags, disguises, pacing of the action (especially in Mozart’s remarkable Act II finale), and archetypal origins of *Figaro*’s characters betray a debt to the Italian improv comedy tradition known as *commedia dell’arte*, though Beaumarchais molded stock types into distinguishable individuals. Da Ponte and Mozart pushed things further in the case of the Countess, who is given two glorious arias that deeply humanize and dramatically center her distress. Act III’s “Dove sono” emotionally grounds the Countess’s plight while speaking for any spouse anytime anywhere who in a private moment has wondered: What happened to my marriage? Whereas the Countess, through Da Ponte’s poetry and Mozart’s music, becomes a finely-sculpted character, Cherubino, who confesses in “Non so più” that he can’t even control himself, remains an almost inanimate

“Figaro interrogates class privilege but also, perhaps even more forcefully, male privilege.”

Europe. After writing the libretto on the sly, Da Ponte was given the go-ahead to pursue his first collaboration with Mozart only after reassuring Emperor Joseph II that he had “omitted and shortened anything that could offend the sensibility and decency” of His Majesty.

Much of the stage action involves cajoling the chronically philandering Count to come around: concede Figaro’s wedding, desist in his pursuit of Susanna, do right by the Countess, cut Cherubino a break. Though driven by the satisfaction of an indulgent sovereign’s well-deserved comeuppance, *Figaro* also asks a fundamentally human question: how do we reconcile personal desires with our obligations to others, whether social, professional, conjugal, legal, or ethical? Interactions among the characters are often guided by caste, custom, and personal wiles, though to a striking degree they are also bureaucratic, mediated by papers that are flashed throughout the opera: military commissions, anonymous letters, passed love notes, IOUs. Cornered by the Count to identify an official document, Figaro stalls, rummaging his pockets: “Give me a minute. I have so many.”

The unstable relationship between individuals and the world they occupy is perhaps best captured by the Count-

force to be reckoned with, one that is alternately put into action or shooed, as necessary. He is incidental, even dispensable, within the social order of Beaumarchais’ castle or Michael Cavanagh’s Great House, yet he is everywhere, single-handedly making the Countess the object of unquenchable passion she so desperately longs to be.

In this regard, alongside perennial philosophical questions about how relationships, communities, and societies should work, *Figaro* presents narrative ambiguities that each production and its audience must figure out for itself: Is the title character intent on disrupting the prevailing status quo, or is he, like Don Basilio, content to work the system? Is the Count genuinely or strategically contrite at the end? Is his denouement a moment of truth, or truthiness? How receptive is the Countess, or even Susanna, to Cherubino’s pubescent come-ons? (We know what Beaumarchais thought: in the somewhat obscure third installment of the Figaro trilogy, *The Guilty Mother*, Rosina bears a child by Cherubino).

If Mozart and Da Ponte’s adaptation ramped up the human intrigue, it also, as Da Ponte suggested, tamped down some of the more overt activist politics. The fact



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that *The Marriage of Figaro* emerged against the backdrop of three epoch-defining revolutions—in the United States in 1776, in France in 1789, and in Haiti in 1791—is a reminder of the social turbulence that was in the air and had concrete stakes for late-eighteenth-century audiences. The American Revolution was a popular topic of plays and operas in Mozart's Vienna and Beaumarchais himself was an ardent supporter of the uprising in the American colonies. Cavanagh's production of *The Marriage of Figaro* for San Francisco Opera reanimates this history by returning the work to a post-revolutionary point of departure, with all its promise and trepidation.

The energies that motivated Mary Wollstonecraft's influential 1792 book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, are also part of this context. *Figaro* interrogates class privilege but also, perhaps even more forcefully, male privilege. The two often intersect. The Count's determination to redeem his "feudal rights" to Susanna seems driven as much by maintaining his supremacy over Figaro as by sexual attraction: "You were not born, audacious one, to give me torment and perhaps even laugh at my unhappiness," he rants in "Vedrò mentr'io sospiro," revolted by the thought of being denied any pleasure in life his servant is entitled to. Beaumarchais' play included sharply worded feminist commentary by Marcellina, carried over into the opera by an Act IV aria prefaced by her terse dictum: "all women should defend their unfortunate sex, so wrongly oppressed by ungrateful men." These sentiments are also conveyed in spirit, if soft-pedalled, through girl talk between Susanna and the Countess—who rationalizes the

explosively jealous, womanizing Count's behavior as typical of "modern husbands"—and by Barbarina, who maneuvers her outing of the Count's advances to her own advantage. Figaro's mistaken belief that Susanna, the opera's most sensible character, has yielded to the Count prompts a misogynistic, fourth-wall-breaking outburst in Act IV. But he, too, gets his just deserts for underestimating his bride when he is duped into eavesdropping on Susanna's feigned infidelity in "Deh vieni, non tardar," an aria as ravishingly beautiful as it is utterly false.

Adaptations allow people to re-tell and interact with stories, generating both process and product. As a product, an adaptation of a canonic opera can offer a gratifying re-encounter with a familiar story read to us in an unfamiliar voice, refilling a prescription with a Cracker Jack box surprise. As a process, adaptations are about something more active and ongoing: the work of interpretation through which, in the case of *Figaro*, we discern meaning within a Bermuda Triangle of play, opera, and historically-situated production. This process extends to the audience. What world did these characters live in? What kind of world do we want to live in? Being confronted with stubbornly recurring questions through Beaumarchais', Da Ponte's, Mozart's, and Cavanagh's *Figaro* is not just another opportunity to find the right answer. It is an invitation to gauge the contemporary urgency of these questions, to think anew about what they might mean in our own time. 🌟

Mark Burford is Associate Professor of Music at Reed College, where he is also chair of the American Studies program.

ARTIST PROFILES

*San Francisco Opera Debut ♪ Role Debut



HENRIK NÁNÁSI
(Pécs, Hungary)
Conductor
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: *Elektra*
Recent and
Upcoming: *Cavalleria*
Rusticana/Pagliacci
(Gran Teatre del
Liceu Barcelona);
Iolanta/Bluebeard's Castle (Metropolitan
Opera); *Madama Butterfly* (Lyric Opera
of Chicago); *Eugene Onegin* (Munich's
Bavarian State Opera); *La Traviata* (Madrid's
Teatro Real); Concerts with Orchestre
National du Capitole de Toulouse,
Sinfonia Varsovia, New Jersey Symphony
Orchestra, Orchestra Filarmonica di
Bologna, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra



MICHAEL SUMUEL
Bass-Baritone
(Odessa, Texas)
Figaro
San Francisco
Opera Highlights:
Tom in Christopher
Theofanidis'
Heart of a Soldier;
Elviro in Handel's

Xerxes; Escamillo in *Carmen*;
Masetto in *Don Giovanni*
Recent and Upcoming: Escamillo in
Carmen (Norwegian National Opera and
Ballet); Mozart's Mass in C minor (Cleveland
Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke's Carnegie
Hall); Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (Los
Angeles Philharmonic Hollywood Bowl,
Oklahoma City Philharmonic, Seattle
Symphony); Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*
(Grant Park Music Festival); Marcello
in *La Bohème* (Houston Grand Opera);
Alidoro in *La Cenerentola* (Oslo); Haydn's
Theresienmesse (Grant Park Chicago);
Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* (San Diego
Symphony); Schubertiade (Wolf Trap
Vienna Virginia); Handel's *Messiah* (Phoenix
Symphony, New Jersey Symphony
Orchestra); Bach's *Magnificat* (Mercury
Houston); Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*
(Glyndebourne Festival Opera); Theseus
in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
(Teatro Massimo di Palermo); Kate Whitley's
"I am I say" (Multi-Story Orchestra BBC
Proms); Bach's *St. John Passion* (Music
of the Baroque Chicago); Bach's *St.*
Matthew Passion (Mercury Houston)
Merola Opera Program 2009



JEANINE DE BIQUE *
Soprano (Worthing
Christ Church,
Barbados)
Susanna
Recent and
Upcoming: Title role
of Handel's *Rodelinda*
(Opéra de Lille);
Donna Anna in *Don*

Giovanni (Opéra National du Rhin); Aida
in Micha Hamel's *Caruso a Cuba* (Dutch
National Opera); Annio in *La Clemenza*
di Tito (Salzburg Festival, Dutch National
Opera); Musetta in *La Bohème* (Theater
St. Gallen); Helena in *A Midsummer*
Night's Dream (Deutsche Oper Berlin);
Micaëla in *Carmen* (Gran Teatre del Liceu
Barcelona); Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare*
(Theater St. Gallen); Mahler's Symphony
No. 4 (Milan, St. Petersburg, Munich,
Budapest); Handel's *Messiah* (Melbourne
Symphony, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra,
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic); New
Year's concerts (Deutsches Symphonie-
Orchester Berlin); Handel arias and Mozart's
Requiem (Budapest Festival Orchestra
Hollywood Bowl, Lincoln Center); Iphis
in Handel's *Jephtha* (Scottish Chamber
Orchestra BBC Proms); Mahler's Symphony
No. 8 (Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Ravinia Festival); Mozart's *Exultate*
Jubilate (Atlanta Symphony Orchestra);
Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (La Seine
Musicale Paris); Mahler's Symphony
No. 2 (Orchestre National du Capitole
de Toulouse, Philharmonie de Paris)



LEVENTE MOLNÁR *
Baritone (Budapest,
Hungary)
Almaviva, the Count
Recent and
Upcoming: Viceroy
Bánk in Ferenc Erkel's
Bánk bán (Hungarian
State Opera, New
York tour); Belcore

in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Munich's Bavarian
State Opera); Germont in *La Traviata*
(Tel Aviv); Renato Anckerström in *Un*
Ballo in Maschera (Budapest); Lescaut
in *Manon Lescaut* (Budapest); Sharpless
in *Madama Butterfly* (Munich); Marcello
in *La Bohème* (Budapest, Munich)
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NICOLE HEASTON *

Soprano (Chicago, Illinois)

Rosina, the Countess
Recent and

Upcoming: Countess Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Hamburg State Opera); Mimi in *La Bohème* (Houston

Grand Opera); Liù in *Turandot* (Orquesta Filarmónica de Jalisco); title role of *Didone Abbandonata* (Theater Basel); Mahler Symphony No. 2 (Houston Symphony); recital (Wang Center Naples Florida); title role of *Thaïs* (Utah Opera); Opening Weekend Gala (Memphis Symphony)



SERENA MALFI *

Mezzo-Soprano (Pomigliano d'Arco, Italy)

Cherubino
Recent and

Upcoming: Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Vienna State Opera, Teatro Colón Buenos

Aires, Muscat, Metropolitan Opera); Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Teatro Real Madrid, Royal Opera Covent Garden, Canadian Opera Company, Zürich Opera; Teatro Comunale di Bologna); Despina in *Così fan tutte* (Milan's Teatro alla Scala); Annio in *La Clemenza di Tito* (Munich's Bavarian State Opera); Angelina in *La Cenerentola* (Paris Opéra, Vienna, Teatro di San Carlo, Naples, Opéra de Lausanne, Opera di Roma, Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia Valencia, Buenos Aires); Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* (Théâtre des Champs Elysées, Paris Opera, Metropolitan Opera); Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* (Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, Opéra Royal de Versailles, Drottningholm Sweden, Bucharest); Pippo in Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra* (Milan); Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (Oviedo); Ruggiero in *Alcina* (Dresden); Siébel in *Faust* (Madrid)



JAMES CRESWELL

Bass (Seattle, Washington)

Bartolo

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in Mark Adamo's *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*; Comte des Grieux in *Manon*; Friar Lawrence in *Romeo & Juliet*

Recent and Upcoming: Il Cieco in *Iris* (Scottish Opera); Count Walter in *Luisa Miller* (English National Opera); Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* (London

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Philharmonic Orchestra); Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* (Santa Fe Opera); Vodnik in *Rusalka* (Santa Fe Opera) Merola Opera Program 2000



CATHERINE COOK
Mezzo-Soprano (Daly City, California)
Marcellina
San Francisco Opera Highlights: over 300 performances in over 50 productions, including Jade Boucher in Jake

Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*; Mrs. Sedley in *Peter Grimes*; Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*; Emilia in *Otello*
Recent and Upcoming: Mother Bailey in Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life* (San Francisco Opera); Mrs. Peachum in *The Threepenny Opera* (West Edge Opera); Tom Cipullo's *The Parting* (Music of Remembrance); Camila in Thomas Adès' *The Exterminating Angel* (Metropolitan Opera); the Innkeeper in *Boris Godunov* (San Francisco Symphony); Mama in Stewart Wallace's *Harvey Milk* (Opera Parallèle) Frederica Von Stade Distinguished Chair in Voice (San Francisco Conservatory of Music)
Instagram: @catherineacook
Facebook: catherine.cook.3705
San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship 1991, 1992; Merola Opera Program 1990



GREG FEDDERLY
Tenor (Fort Bragg, North Carolina)
Basilio
San Francisco Opera Highlights: Brighella in *Ariadne auf Naxos*; Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*; Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di*

Figaro; Pang in *Turandot*; Bardolfo in *Falstaff*
Recent and Upcoming: Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* (Metropolitan Opera and LA Opera); Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Metropolitan Opera); Bob Boles in *Peter Grimes* (Los Angeles, San Diego Opera); Prunier in *La Rondine* (Los Angeles); Red Whiskers in *Billy Budd* (Los Angeles); Orellano in *Dulce Rosa* (Los Angeles); Brighella in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Washington National Opera); Arcadio in *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Opera Colorado); Philistine Messenger in *Samson et Delila* (San Diego); Messenger in *Aida* (San Diego)

ARTIST PROFILES



BRENTON RYAN

Tenor (Sedalia, Missouri)

Curzio

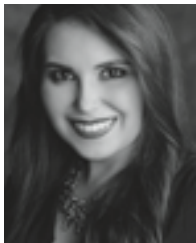
San Francisco Opera

Highlights: Janek in *The Makropulos Case*; Novice in *Billy Budd*

Recent and

Upcoming: Der Naar in

Wozzeck (Metropolitan Opera); Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* (Houston Grand Opera, Metropolitan Opera); Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (LA Opera); Spoletta in *Tosca* (Metropolitan Opera); Pedrillo in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Opéra de Monte Carlo); Nero in *The Coronation of Poppea* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis); Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Opera Philadelphia)



NATALIE IMAGE ♫

Soprano

(Tsawwassen, Canada)

Barbarina

San Francisco Opera

Highlights: Frasquita in *Carmen*; First Wood Nymph in *Rusalka*

Recent and

Upcoming: Dew Fairy

in *Hansel and Gretel* (San Francisco Opera); *The Future Is Now: Adler Fellows Concert*; A Viennese New Year (Victoria Symphony); Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* (Opera San José); Bernstein's *Songfest* (Oakland Symphony); Galatea in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* (San Francisco Chamber Orchestra); Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5 by Villa-Lobos (SFCO); Schwabacher Recital Series concert; title role of Alma Deutscher's *Cinderella* (Opera San José); Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* (Merola Opera Program); Handel's *Messiah* (Okanagan Symphony Orchestra); Johanna in *Sweeney Todd* (Opera on the Avalon) San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship 2018, 2019; Merola Opera Program 2017



BOJAN KNEŽEVIĆ

Bass-Baritone (Belgrade, Serbia)

Antonio

San Francisco Opera

Highlights: Solo artist in 40 productions, including *Dulcamara* in *L'Elisir d'Amore*; Harashta in *The*

Cunning Little Vixen; Hali in *L'italiana in Algeri*; Sacristan in *Tosca*; Antonio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (four previous seasons) **Recent and Upcoming:** Title role of *Don Pasquale* (Mendocino Music Festival); *Dulcamara* in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Mendocino);

Opera Parallèle Gala Concert; Pascoe in *The Wreckers* (Island City Opera) San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship 1995; Merola Opera Program 1992, 1993, 1994



MICHAEL CAVANAGH

(London, Canada)

Director

San Francisco

Opera Highlights:

John Adams' *Nixon in China*; Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*; *Lucia di Lammermoor*; Ana Sokolović's *Svadba-Wedding*

Recent and Upcoming:

Così fan tutte (San Francisco Opera); *Don Giovanni* (San Francisco Opera); *Nabucco* (L'Opéra de Québec); *Aida* (Royal Swedish Opera); *Otello* (Vancouver Opera); *Nixon in China* (Stockholm); *Rigoletto* (San Diego, Montreal, Calgary) Faculty member at Western University (London, Ontario)



ERHARD ROM

(Seattle, Washington)

Set Designer

San Francisco Opera

Highlights: John Adams' *Nixon in China*; Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*; *Lucia di Lammermoor*

Recent and

Upcoming: *Così fan tutte* (San Francisco Opera); *Don Giovanni* (San Francisco Opera); *Nixon in China* (Royal Swedish Opera); *Semele* (Seattle Opera); *La Bohème* (Seattle Opera); Kevin Puts' *Silent Night* (Washington National Opera, Wexford Festival, Glimmerglass Festival); *Rigoletto* (Houston Grand Opera); Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* (Vancouver Opera, Minnesota Opera); *Otello* (Vancouver Opera); *A Blizzard at Marblehead Neck* (Glimmerglass); *Later the Same Evening* (Glimmerglass); *Faust* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis); *Jane Eyre* (Saint Louis); *Carmen* (Saint Louis); *The Shining* (Minnesota); *Rusalka* (Minnesota); *Romeo and Juliet* (Minnesota) Teaches design at Montclair State University, New Jersey



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CONSTANCE HOFFMAN
(Oakland, California)
Costume Designer
San Francisco Opera Highlights:
Rigoletto; Mark Adamo's *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*
Recent and

Upcoming: *Così fan tutte* (San Francisco Opera); *Don Giovanni* (San Francisco Opera); *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis); *Grimm Tales* (Ballet Austin); Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko* (Opera Slovenske Narodne Divadlo); *Rigoletto* (LA Opera); *Don Carlos* (Washington National Opera); David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (The Court Theatre New York); Dvořák's *Dmitrij* (Bard Summerscape Festival)
Associate Arts Professor in the Department of Design for Stage and Film at the Tisch School of the Arts



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*; *Così 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



JANE COX *
(Dublin, Ireland)
Lighting Designer
Recent and
Upcoming: *Così fan tutte* (San Francisco Opera); *Don Giovanni* (San Francisco Opera); *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Houston Grand

Opera, Sydney Opera House); *Between the World and Me* (tour); *Hamlet* (Barbican London); For Broadway: *True West*; *King Lear*; *Jitney*; *Machinal*; *Amelie*; *Color Purple*
Member of Monica Bill Barnes Dance Company
Director of Princeton University's Program in Theater



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; *Doctor Atomic*; *The Merry Widow*; *Iphigénie en Tauride*; *The Ballad of Baby Doe*; *Turandot*; *Guillaume Tell*; *Eugene Onegin*

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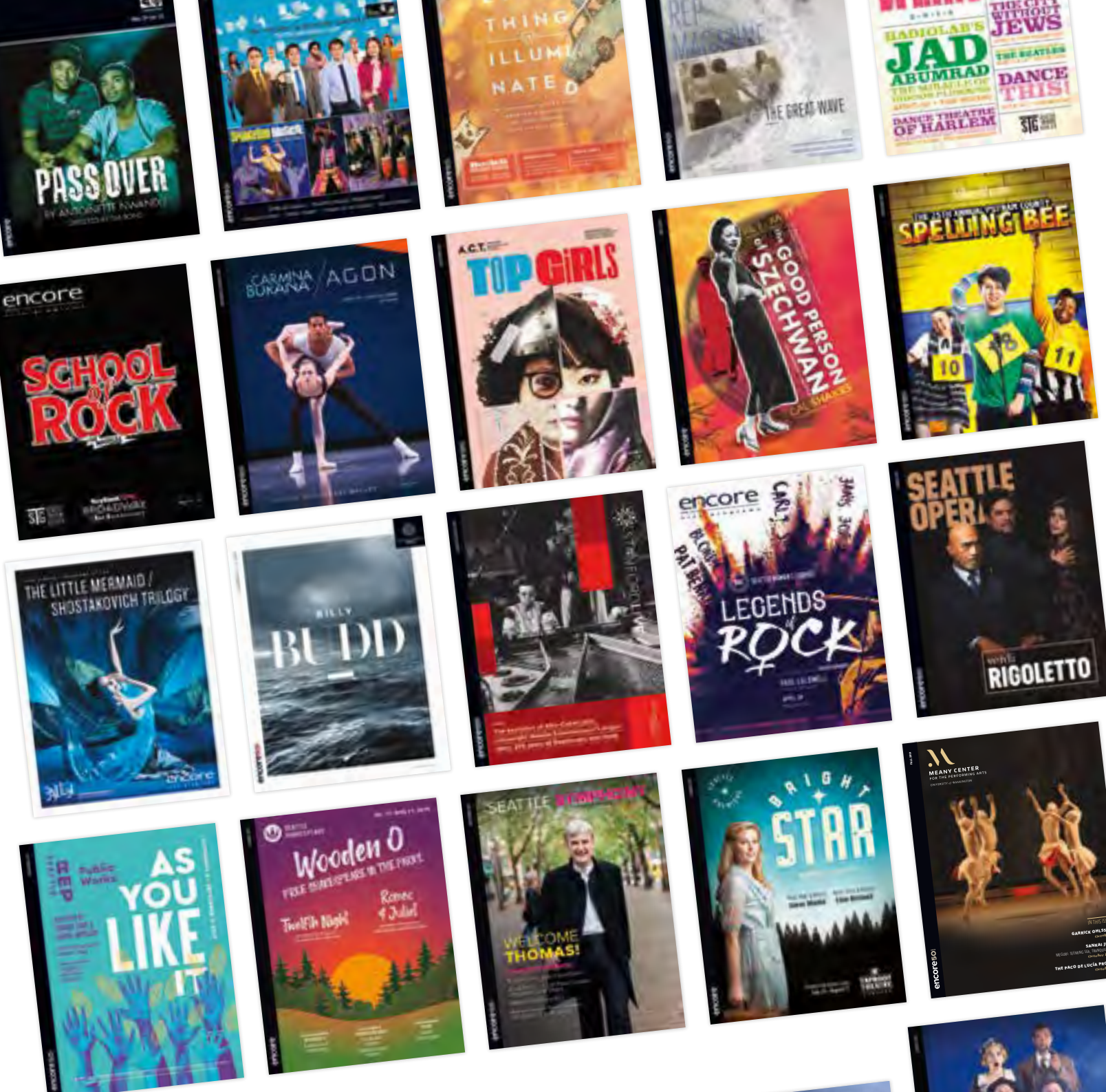
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DIVERSITY

ON STAGE

The world of opera is changing—for the better. Creators and purveyors of operatic music are honoring the rich legacy of great works while also creating space for new operas on challenging subject matter reflecting contemporary issues. At San Francisco Opera, we are invested in diversifying our audience, bringing racially diverse artists to our stage, and addressing the sensitive topic of how this art form is perceived and engaged with by a dramatically changing society.

We are critically aware of how storylines offer opportunity for dialogue around delicate topics like race, power, privilege, and oppression. Sometimes, there is an unexpected intersection of creativity, intention, and societal issues. Our current production of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, one of the masterpieces in the operatic canon, is set in an American manor house in a time period in U.S. history (late 18th Century) filled with conflict and turmoil because of the devastation of the Revolutionary War and the potent preeminence of slavery.

In this production, the roles of Figaro and Susanna are played by bass-baritone Michael Sumuel and soprano Jeanine De Bique, both artists of color. Sumuel comes from Texas, while De Bique hails from Trinidad. Each has considerable professional accomplishments to date, with De Bique making her exciting Company debut and Sumuel most recently seen here as Masetto in *Don Giovanni* and Escamillo in *Carmen*.

These acclaimed artists, each cast before the production's setting was firmly established, are perfect for these leading roles and are excited to be taking them on. Yet, as the narrative tells us, Figaro and Susanna are servants in the Great American House of Mozart and Da Ponte. Are they slaves? Well, not intentionally. They are clearly meant to be of a dif-

ferent class than the landowners, but this production was not founded on the premise of negotiating historical race relations. However, no matter the intention, the optics are unmistakably clear. This production has inadvertently stumbled onto a well-recognized socio-cultural wound.

Director Michael Cavanagh sets *Figaro* in a post-revolutionary time and place, a context holding vast possibility for some and great resentment and resistance for others. Cavanagh's staging, like Mozart's music, reveals the nuanced complexity of the human story in all its glories and struggles. The director invites us to consider the society we should aspire to build, and what this construct should take

from its members and give in return. These big questions originating from a pivotal period in our history still plague us today. Four hundred years after the first enslaved Africans arrived in the English colony of Virginia, America is still dealing with the ugly legacy of racism and inequality.

With the emergence of San Francisco Opera's department of Diversity, Equity and Community (DEC), we have an opportunity to thoughtfully notice and name thorny predicaments that can arise in the operatic domain. This is a learning opportunity for all of us as we come to terms with the confluence of history,

artistry, and consciousness. With DEC, we have a context from which to scaffold our dialogue as we acknowledge who we are as a Company and who we hope to become.

Our intention is to continue to diversify our art and negotiate the complexities of presenting opera in a culturally and racially inclusive society. As one of the largest performing arts organizations in California, we commit to leading the industry with integrity and courage, embracing the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion. ❁

“Cavanagh’s staging, like Mozart’s music, reveals the nuanced complexity of the human story in all its glories and struggles.”

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59 Productions

* San Francisco Opera debut

** U.S. debut

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† Current Adler Fellow

^{*} Former Merola Opera Program participant

Cover Artist

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Ian Robertson, *Chorus Director*

Fabrizio Corona, *Associate Chorus Master*

Mary Finch, *Chorus and Dance Personnel Manager*

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Nadima Avakian	Sally Mouzon*
Buffy Baggott	Sally Porter Munro
Elizabeth Baker	Erin Neff
Kathleen Bayler	William O'Neill
C. Michael Belle	Rachelle Perry
William Bryan*	Phillip Pickens
Janet Campbell	William Pickersgill
Alan Cochran	Chester Pidduck*
Sara Colburn	Virginia Pluth†
Chris Corley	Laurel Cameron Porter*
Dvora Djoraev	Valery Portnov
Mary Finch	Laurel Rice†
Anders Fröhlich*	Colby Roberts
Claudia Haider	Carole Schaffer
Daniel Harper	Sigmund Seigel
Christopher Jackson	Shelley Seitz
Ken Johnson	Dan Stanley
David Kekuewa	Jesslyn Thomas*
Claire Kelm	Jere Torkelsen*
Bojan Knežević*	Andrew Truett
Elisabeth Rom Lucio	Donna Turchi
Frederick Matthews	Richard Walker†
Angela Eden Moser*	Mitzie Weiner

* Solo Role

† Chorus member on Leave of Absence

EXTRA CHORUS

Ben Brady	Jim Monios
Angela Cadelago	Jess G. Perry
Cheryl Cain	Aimée Puentes
Katie Carlson Cartwright	Samuel Rabinowitz
Christopher Filipowicz	Pedro Rodelas
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* Solo Dancer

^ Tenured

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Kay Stern, *Concertmaster*
Laura Albers, *Associate Concertmaster**
Heidi Wilcox, *Assistant Concertmaster*
Jennifer Cho
Dawn Harms
Mariya Borozina
Lev Rankov
Barbara Riccardi
Dian Zhang
Leonid Igudesman
Jennifer Hsieh
Asuka Annie Yano

SECOND VIOLIN

Jeremy Preston, *Principal*
Martha Simonds, *Associate Principal*
Beni Shinohara, *Assistant Principal*
Eva Karasik
Maya Cohon
Leslie Ludena
Craig Reiss
Heeguen Song**

VIOLA

Carla Maria Rodrigues, *Principal*
Sergey Rakitchenkov, *Associate Principal**
Paul Nahhas, *Assistant Principal*†
Patricia Heller
Jonna Hervig
Natalia Vershilova
Joy Fellows
Elizabeth Prior**

CELLO

David Kadarauch, *Principal*
Thalia Moore, *Associate Principal*
Peter Myers, *Assistant Principal*
Nora Pirquet
Emil Miland
Victoria Ehrlich
Ruth Lane

BASS

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

FLUTE

Julie McKenzie, *Principal*
Patricia Farrell†
Barbara Chaffe**
Stephanie McNab*

PICCOLO

Stephanie McNab

OBOE

Mingjia Liu, *Principal*
Gabriel Young*
Janet Popesco Archibald

ENGLISH HORN

Janet Popesco Archibald

CLARINET

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

BASS CLARINET

Anthony Striplen

BASSOON

Rufus Olivier, *Principal*
Daniel MacNeill*
Michael Severance

CONTRABASSOON

Michael Severance

HORN

Kevin Rivard, *Co-Principal*
Mark Almond, *Co-Principal*
Keith Green
Brian McCarty
William Klingelhoffer**

TRUMPET

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

TROMBONE

Samuel Schlosser, *Principal*
Donald Kennelly
David Ridge

TUBA/CIMBASSO

Zachariah Spellman

TIMPANI

John Burgardt

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 Igudeman
First Violin



Jennifer Hsieh
First Violin



Asuka Annie Yano
First Violin



Jeremy Preston
Principal
Second Violin



Martha Simonds
Associate Principal
Second Violin



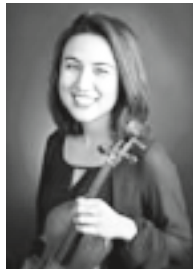
Beni Shinohara
Assistant Principal
Second Violin



Eva Karasik
Second Violin



Leslie Ludena
Second Violin



Maya Cohon
Second Violin



Craig Reiss
Second Violin



Heeguen Song
Second Violin
Regular Substitute



Carla Maria Rodrigues
Principal
Viola



Sergey Rakitchenkov
Associate Principal
Viola



Paul Nahhas
Assistant Principal Viola
Leave of Absence



Patricia Heller
Viola



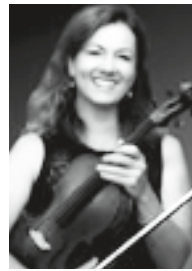
Jonna Hervig
Viola



Natalia Vershilova
Viola



Joy Fellows
Viola



Elizabeth Prior
Viola
Regular Substitute



David Kadarauich
Principal
Cello



Thalia Moore
Associate Principal
Cello



Peter Myers
Assistant Principal
Cello



Nora Pirquet
Cello



Emil Miland
Cello



Victoria Ehrlich
Cello



Ruth Lane
Cello



Joseph Lescher
Principal
Bass

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ORCHESTRA CONTINUED



Jonathan Lancelle
Associate Principal
Bass



Steven D'Amico
Assistant Principal
Bass



Shinji Eshima
Bass



Mark Drury
Bass



Julie McKenzie
Principal
Flute



Patricia Farrell
Flute
Leave of Absence



Stephanie McNab
Flute & Piccolo



Barbara Chaffe
Flute
Regular Substitute



Mingjia Liu
Principal
Oboe



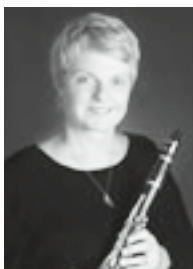
Gabriel Young
Oboe



Janet Popesco Archibald
Oboe & English Horn



Jose Gonzalez Granero
Principal Clarinet



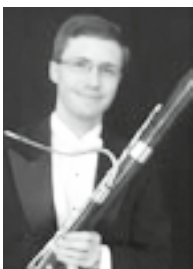
Joanne Burke Eisler
Assistant Principal
Clarinet



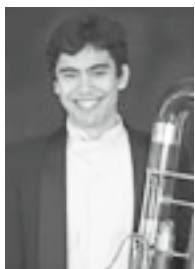
Anthony Striplen
Clarinet &
Bass Clarinet



Rufus Olivier
Principal
Bassoon



Daniel MacNeill
Bassoon



Michael Severance
Bassoon &
Contrabassoon



Kevin Rivard
Co-Principal
Horn



Mark Almond
Co-Principal
Horn



Keith Green
Horn



Brian McCarty
Horn



William Klingelhoffer
Horn
Regular Substitute



Adam Luftman
Principal
Trumpet



William Holmes
Trumpet
Leave of Absence



John Pearson
Trumpet



Scott Macomber
Trumpet
Regular Substitute



Samuel Schlosser
Principal Trombone



Donald Kennelly
Trombone



David Ridge
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Bass Trombone



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Richard Kvistad
Principal Percussion &
Associate Timpani



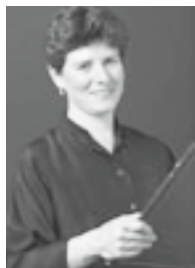
Patricia Niemi
Percussion



Olga Ortenberg Rakitchenkov
Harp



Tracy Davis
Orchestra Manager



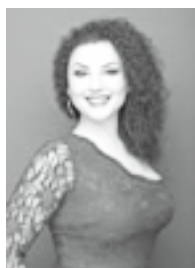
Carrie Weick
Librarian



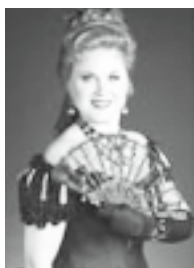
Timothy Spears
Assistant Orchestra
Manager & Librarian

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

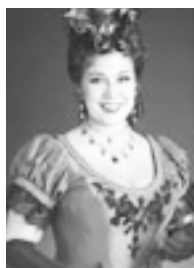
SAN FRANCISCO OPERA REGULAR CHORUS



Nadima Avakian
Soprano



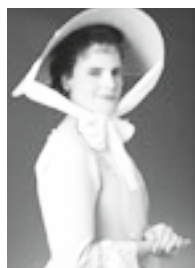
Kathleen Bayler
Soprano



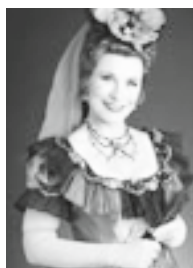
Sara Colburn
Soprano



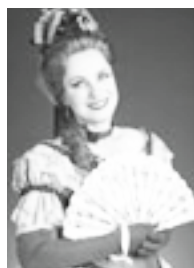
Dvora Djoraev
Soprano



Mary Finch
Soprano



Claire Kelm
Soprano



Elisabeth Rom Lucio
Soprano



Angela Eden Moser
Soprano



Rachelle Perry
Soprano



Virginia Pluth
Soprano
Leave of Absence



Carole Schaffer
Soprano



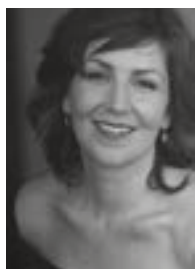
Jesslyn Thomas
Soprano



Mitzie Weiner
Soprano



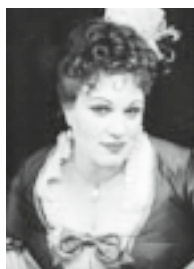
Buffy Baggott
Mezzo-Soprano



Elizabeth Baker
Mezzo-Soprano



Janet Campbell
Mezzo-Soprano



Claudia Haider
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Mouzon
Mezzo-Soprano



Sally Porter Munro
Mezzo-Soprano



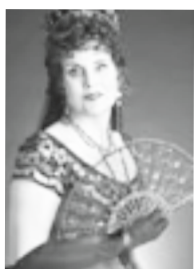
Erin Neff
Mezzo-Soprano



**Laurel Cameron
Porter**
Mezzo-Soprano



Laurel Rice
Mezzo-Soprano
Leave of Absence



Shelley Seitz
Mezzo-Soprano



Donna Turchi
Mezzo-Soprano



C. Michael Belle
Tenor



Alan Cochran
Tenor



Chris Corley
Tenor



Daniel Harper
Tenor

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA REGULAR CHORUS CONTINUED



Christopher Jackson
Tenor



Phillip Pickens
Tenor



Chester Pidduck
Tenor



Colby Roberts
Tenor



Sigmund Seigel
Tenor



Dan Stanley
Tenor



Andrew Truett
Tenor



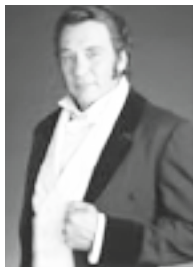
Richard Walker
Tenor
Leave of Absence



William Bryan
Baritone



Anders Fröhlich
Baritone



Ken Johnson
Baritone



David Kekuewa
Baritone



Frederick Matthews
Baritone



Jere Torkelsen
Baritone



Bojan Knežević
Bass



William O'Neill
Bass



William Pickersgill
Bass



Valery Portnov
Bass

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

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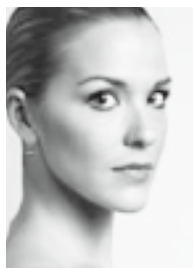
Brett Conway



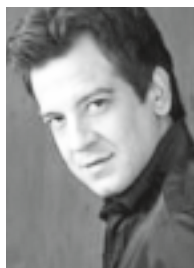
Blanche Hampton



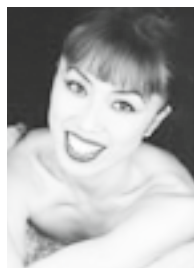
Bryan Ketron



Rachel Speidel Little



Jekyns Pelaez



Chiharu Shibata

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* deceased

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- 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.

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

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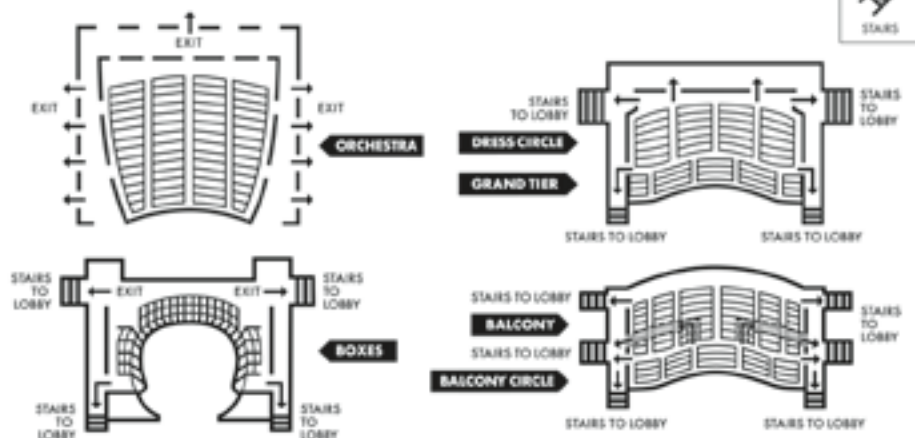
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Daniela Mack in the 2015 production of The Barber of Seville

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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 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 you part of the Opera’s future.”

To learn more about Legacy Giving at San Francisco Opera, please contact Kyle Polite, Deputy Director of Development, at **(415) 551-6226** or kpolite@sfoera.com

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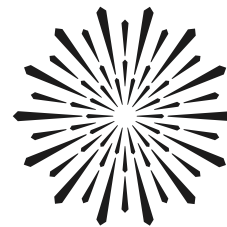
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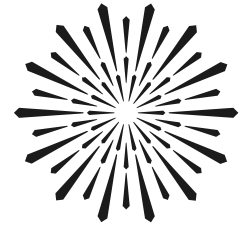
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THE HOUSE THAT MOZART AND DA PONTE BUILT

BY GENERAL DIRECTOR MATTHEW SHILVOCK

It is a rare opportunity in this art form to be able to create a production concept that unfolds over a period of years. One exception is Wagner's *Ring* cycle which is often rolled out by companies over a multi-year period before being performed as a complete tetralogy. This fall at San Francisco Opera we embark upon a particularly fascinating three-season project: new productions of the operas Mozart wrote with librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte—*The Marriage of Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Don Giovanni*. These form the next of our legacy productions, conceived, designed, and built to last for many years to come.

Although these exquisite Mozart operas were never intended to be presented as a trilogy, they have in common a deeply humanistic perspective. Taken as individual operas, each makes particularly profound and intimate statements about the nature of human relationships. But put them together as a trilogy, and an even more captivating story emerges. Director Michael Cavanagh has created a compelling progression through these three operas that will explore the promise and pitfalls of human society, moving from the hope and challenges of new beginnings, to a grappling with one's place in the world, to the fragmentation of a society strained by the abuse of power. This trilogy concept will set the stage for a deeply thoughtful exploration of the ways in which we struggle on both an individual and a societal level to coexist and grow together.

While Wagner uses grand archetypes of gods and heroes to explore themes of human society, Mozart and Da Ponte's "cycle" focuses on everyday people. To bring these stories even closer to home, our productions will take place in a beautiful Neo-Classical American house, an architectural treasure that survives and adapts over hundreds of years, witnessing generations of lives playing out under its roof.

Our trilogy begins with *The Marriage of Figaro* in post-



KRISTEN LOKEN

Revolutionary War America just as the house nears completion. We see the young country, as well as our young lovers, emerge from an old-world order and strive for a brighter future. In *Così fan tutte*, we are in the same house but 150 years have passed and the house has been repurposed as a 1930s country club. The confused romantic anxieties of the lovers reflect American society at a crossroads, emerging out of the Depression with hope and promise, but grappling with what it means to

be the dominant nation-state as World War II looms. *Don Giovanni* moves the house on another 150 years in a dystopian 2080s and a world in which society is collapsing. Resources are scant and controlled by oligarchs, individuals are fending for themselves and some have found shelter in the crumbling structure of our house. The promise of democracy is in peril, but with the demise of the Don comes healing and rebirth. In the epilogue of *Don Giovanni*—often a trivialized moment in which we chuckle at how quickly everything returns to normal—we will see the house being restored. Society will turn another chapter, and the house will bear witness to more generations of human beings trying to figure out how to get along.

Mozart and Da Ponte had an extraordinary way of delving deep into the human condition that feels very real and domestic. Exploring this trilogy of operas through the lens of a 300-year house, we will see three unique human stories emerge in three distinct groups of people linked across time by virtue of inhabiting a singular space. Think of your home or another important building in your life and think about the loves, joys, conflicts, and tragedies that have taken place there with all the prior inhabitants. We are implicitly connected to those histories.

Over the next three seasons, we will have a unique chance to peer through the windows of this house as it plays home to three profound case studies on the human condition. I am so excited to peer through those windows together! 🍷

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it starts with a dream