

COSÌ FAN TUTTE

BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART



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Note from Director Michael Cavanagh

Così fan tutte belongs in the middle of our trilogy of Mozart-Da Ponte operas because it examines people, and a society, at a crossroads. The great American manor house we saw being built in the late 18th century in *The Marriage of Figaro* has changed hands many times in the intervening 150 years. Now it's at the peak of its form, repurposed as a luxurious country club in the late 1930s. America itself stands in an era of great transition. It emerged from the Great Depression only to see the winds of war swirling once again in Europe. Now it was poised at a crossroads of its own, deciding whether to take its place at the forefront of nations or retreat into self-absorbed isolation.

The two couples at the heart of *Così fan tutte* could not care less. They are inexperienced, overconfident, privileged, and sheltered, a perfect set of pre-conditions for disaster when it comes to life choices. The wager the men make with Don Alfonso is a foregone conclusion almost as soon as it's made. The sisters to whom they're engaged share the same character flaws. With their inflated sense of self, poor impulse control, and immaturity, they're also doomed to see their lives spiral out of control. That they're unwitting participants in Alfonso (and

Despina's) social experiment doesn't excuse their choices or behavior. That they're unable to consider the real consequences of their decisions explains everything.

So it is with societies, too. If we celebrate only the individual we're doomed to fail as a community. A person's rights and freedoms are important, of course, but they must exist within a framework of common good. When any individual's personal choices threaten the safety, security, or sustainability of their families, neighborhoods, or nations, we've all agreed to limit, punish, or remove them. That's why we have the court system, both the legal one and that of public opinion.

This, in big ways and small, is the lesson of *Così fan tutte*. The subtitle of the opera is "La scuola degli amanti" or The School for Lovers, and it has something to teach us all. We cannot (or, at the very least, should not) live our lives only in the moment, and only for ourselves. We should not live in a fantasy world, with an idealized version of our future. We must take a clear-eyed look at ourselves and those around us and carefully consider the consequences of our actions. This is the only way to survive in the long term, whether as a partner in a relationship, a member of a household, or a nation like America within the world. The alternative is, at the very best, confusion, anxiety, disappointment, and distress. At worst ... well, we have the world of *Don Giovanni* to look forward to.

Michael Cavanagh

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[Così fan tutte](#)

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At a Glance

It was just a silly bet. A joke really. The guys would pretend to go off to war and see if their fiancées would remain faithful for 24 hours. Just the sort of spur-of-the-moment impulse that is a laugh for a day or so and is then pretty much forgotten. Only this time it does not work out that way. Sometimes, things are not as they seem and beneath the surface there is a lot going on, some of which can be quite upsetting. How well do we really know another person? Is this just a cynical, ironic, misogynistic tale? Or is it, as the opera's subtitle states, "a school for lovers"? Opera lovers can disagree about what exactly Mozart and Da Ponte intended with this opera but one thing is clear—it is one of the most profound and disturbing of all comedies.

The Creators

Così fan tutte is the last of the three great operas written by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte. Apparently the project had first been offered to Antonio Salieri who turned it down as entirely unsuitable for an opera. Fortunately, Mozart disagreed when it was offered to him. *Così* was conceived and composed during the last part of 1789, an especially difficult time in Mozart's life. His wife, Constanze, had been dangerously ill for some time and when she was able to, she went to the nearby spa of Baden to aid her recovery. This was extremely expensive and not something Mozart could afford, which meant he had to beg friends for money several times. While Constanze was away, Mozart was plagued by rumors of her flirtations, something that certainly mirrored the plot of his new opera.

Così was first performed in Vienna on January 26, 1790, the day before Mozart's 34th birthday. There was a rumor that the opera was based on a recent scandal among the Viennese aristocracy. There was also a story that no less than Emperor Joseph II himself (a man famous for his low opinion of women) had suggested the subject to Da Ponte. Historians tend to discount both these stories, but there is no doubt that Mozart's audience would have experienced *Così* as very much a contemporary opera, with characters and situations they understood. The surface frivolity of the opera delighted the Viennese, but its initial run was cut short after only five performances by the death of the Emperor.

Elements of the story can be found in antiquity—couple swapping was a well-known comic device in the theater—but the libretto is Da Ponte's original work, and he did not resort to the

usual “excuses” for such illicit behavior being the result of magic, or the intervention of the gods. Da Ponte’s characters are fully aware of what they are doing, which is one reason the opera was viewed as immoral during the 19th Century.

The Setting

Mozart and Da Ponte set their opera in a variety of rooms and gardens in 18th Century Naples during a 24-hour period. The fact that the two sisters are from Ferrara but are in Naples suggests a deliberate artificiality to the setting, a time away from home when one could, perhaps, indulge more freely than at home. As a result the opera has often been presented in different settings to help bring out the underlying truths of the work.

The current production is part two of San Francisco Opera’s Mozart-Da Ponte Trilogy staged by director Michael Cavanagh and set within an American manor house over three different time periods. The house, newly completed around the time of the nation’s founding, was introduced in the Company’s 2019 production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. For *Così fan tutte*, that same house, now at its zenith in the 1930s, has been converted into an exclusive country club. Next summer’s new production of *Don Giovanni* will take place 150 years after *Così* with the house in ruins.

The Music

There are more ensembles in *Così* than in either *The Marriage of Figaro* or *Don Giovanni*, though they are sometimes quite short. The two pairs of lovers, plus the two manipulators (Don Alfonso and Despina) make for an astonishing variety of musical combinations. The elegance and sheer gorgeousness of the music can sometimes obscure the fact that Mozart is always using the music to build the drama. There are fewer arias in *Così* than the other Da Ponte operas, but Mozart often employs them to convey the inner drama taking place, exploiting the emotions of characters, charting their shifting alliances, and even letting the audience know things about the characters they themselves are unaware of, like the fact Fiordiligi is protesting too much in her Act I aria, “Come scoglio.” Some of the music is meltingly tender (the Act I trio, “Soave sia il vento,” for instance, and Ferrando’s Act I aria “Un’aura amorosa”) and there is no doubt of Fiordiligi’s genuine anguish as she sings “Per pietà” in Act II. However the finale to Act I is utter farce and much of Despina’s and Alfonso’s parts are quite cynical. But even when Mozart is setting the most bitter and angry words his music for *Così* is perhaps the most voluptuous he ever composed, and the miraculous way he utilized it has led some critics to consider *Così* his most profound Italian comedy.

In San Francisco Opera History

Così was the last of the three Mozart-Da Ponte operas to be given by San Francisco Opera, after *The Marriage of Figaro* bowed in 1936 and *Don Giovanni* two years later. But when *Così* finally arrived in 1956, conductor Hans Schwieger lead a stellar cast: Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (Fiordiligi), Nell Rankin (Dorabella), Patrice Munsel (Despina), Richard Lewis (Ferrando), Frank Guarrera (Guglielmo), and Lorenzo Alvary (Don Alfonso). In the first year, the Company gave three performances in San Francisco and toured the opera to San Diego and Los Angeles. *Così* was so popular it was given again the next season with many of the same cast,

but with Rita Streich as Despina, Nan Merriman as Dorabella, and Erich Leinsdorf conducting. In fact, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf was San Francisco Opera's Fiordiligi the first four seasons the opera was given (1956, 1957, 1960, 1963) only relinquishing the role in 1970 to Margaret Price when the Company unveiled a new production by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle.

There was some off-stage drama that year when the Dorabella, Teresa Berganza, became ill just before the third performance. Rosalind Elias had done *Così* with Ponnelle in Salzburg and was called at 10 pm and begged to save the next day's show. She got on a plane in New York shortly before midnight, arriving in San Francisco in the wee hours. After a 4 pm rehearsal she retired to her dressing room with a sandwich, then went on stage, less than 24 hours after getting the summons on the other side of the continent. In his history of San Francisco Opera, Arthur Bloomfield reports that Renato Capecchi, the Don Alfonso, told a colleague that Elias "fitted into the show perfectly. The only adjustment was lengthening Berganza's dress."

Evelyn Lear and Pilar Lorengar were also notable in the role of Fiordiligi. Frederica von Stade, Susan Quittmeyer, and Tatiana Troyanos were memorable Dorabellas, with von Stade later returning as Despina, a role in which local audiences had also heard Reri Grist, Graziella Sciutti, and Ruth Ann Swenson. Paul Schoeffler, Geraint Evans, Thomas Stewart, and Richard Stilwell, who first sang Guglielmo, have all appeared as Don Alfonso. Other Guglielmos have included Hermann Prey, Dale Duesing, Tom Krause, and Nathan Gunn. Tenors Cesare Valletti, Ryland Davies, Gösta Winbergh, and Paul Groves have appeared as Ferrando. Notable *Così* conductors have included Company Director Kurt Herbert Adler, Music Director John Prichard (who led the opera during three different seasons), Patrick Summers, Michael Gielen, and Music Director Nicola Luisotti.

—Paul Thomason

Instrumentation & Performing Forces

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- 2 Oboes
- 2 Clarinets
- 2 Bassoons
- 2 Horns
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COSÌ FAN TUTTE

(Sung in Italian with English supertitles)

Opera in two acts by **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Libretto by **Lorenzo Da Ponte**

Cast

(in order of vocal appearance)

<i>Ferrando</i>	Ben Bliss*
<i>Guglielmo</i>	John Brancy
<i>Don Alfonso</i>	Ferruccio Furlanetto
<i>Fiordiligi</i>	Nicole Cabell
<i>Dorabella</i>	Irene Roberts
<i>Despina</i>	Nicole Heaston

Guests and Staff Members

* San Francisco Opera debut † Current Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: *Late 1930s, A Country Club, Mid-Atlantic United States*

ACT I: ROOMS, HALLWAYS, AND GROUNDS OF THE COUNTRY CLUB

—INTERMISSION—

ACT II: ROOMS, HALLWAYS, AND GROUNDS OF THE COUNTRY CLUB

Creative Team

Conductor

Henrik Nánási

Director

Michael Cavanagh

Set and Projection Designer

Erhard Rom

Costume Designer

Constance Hoffman

Lighting Designer

Jane Cox

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Assistant Conductor

William Long

Prompter
Robert Mollicone

Fortepiano Continuo
Bryndon Hassman

Musical Preparation
Bryndon Hassman
Maureen Zoltek
Kseniia Polstiankina Barrad[†]
Andrew King[†]
John Churchwell
Fabrizio Corona

Diction
Alessandra Cattani

Supertitles
Christopher Bergen

Assistant Directors
Roy Rallo
E. Reed Fisher

Stage Manager
Thea Railey

Assistant Stage Managers
Rachel Garoon
Jennifer Harber
Jayne O'Hara

Fight Director
Dave Maier

Costume Supervisor
Galen Till

Wig and Makeup
Jeanna Parham

[Artist Bios](#)

This production is made possible, in part, by Carol Franc Buck Foundation; John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn; Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for New Productions; Koret Foundation; Bernard and Barbro Osher; and Thomas Tilton Production Fund.

Maestro Henrik Nánási's appearance is made possible by a gift to the Conductors Fund by Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem.

Nicole Cabell and Ferruccio Furlanetto's appearances are made possible by a gift to the Great Singers Fund by Joan and David Traitel.

Additional funding is provided by Candace Zander Kahn; Betty and Jack Schafer; and Barbara Moller Ward.

A new San Francisco Opera Production

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1 • 7:30 pm
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3 • 7:30 pm

The performance will last approximately 3 hours and 10 minutes.

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Synopsis

ACT I

Don Alfonso is trying to enlighten Ferrando and Guglielmo as to the true nature of women. He places a bet that he can prove their fiancées, Dorabella and Fiordiligi, respectively, are not the icons of purity the young men believe them to be. Both sides are confident of victory within twenty-four hours, and during this period Ferrando and Guglielmo agree to do as they are told by Don Alfonso.

Sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella are celebrating the virtues of their lovers. Alfonso tells them that their men have been called up and must leave immediately for the front lines. The men feign a tearful farewell scene and “go off to war.” The women are devastated but their maid, Despina, tells them to look on the bright side and have a good time in their absence—in other words, behave exactly as men would do.

Don Alfonso enlists Despina in his scheme, and he presents two “Albanian” friends to the sisters. Neither Fiordiligi nor Dorabella recognize Guglielmo and Ferrando in disguise.

Offended to see the strange men, Fiordiligi and Dorabella are repelled by their advances. They declare fidelity to their lovers. The young men are delighted but Don Alfonso is still confident in his ultimate triumph.

The sisters continue to grieve for their men at the front. The two Albanians return and, despondent in the women’s rejection, swallow “poison” and collapse. The terrified women call for Despina, who goes to find a doctor who claims to cure any illness by magnetism. The men revive and, believing they are in heaven, demand a kiss from their “angels” Fiordiligi and Dorabella. The sisters rebuff their advances once again.

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ACT II

Despina persuades the sisters to befriend their new admirers. They decide on preferences: Dorabella chooses Guglielmo; Fiordiligi selects Ferrando. Each has instinctively chosen the other's partner. Dorabella yields to Guglielmo, exchanging lockets as a pledge of fidelity. Meanwhile, Fiordiligi rejects Ferrando.

Ferrando and Guglielmo report on their progress. Ferrando is furious at the infidelity of his fiancée, Dorabella.

Despina and Dorabella put pressure on Fiordiligi to have fun. Fiordiligi decides she must run away to join Guglielmo at war, but Ferrando confronts her again and she finally yields. Agonized, Guglielmo witnesses it all. Don Alfonso has proven his point and won the bet.

Don Alfonso and Despina arrange for the new couples to be "married" by Despina, disguised as a notary. As the women sign their names, a military band is heard, signaling that the soldiers have returned unexpectedly. In the confusion, the two men disappear, reemerging without their disguise. Shocked at the evidence of a wedding they swear vengeance on their rivals.

The entire plot is finally revealed. All four lovers' certainties have been destroyed and no one knows quite what to believe, except that human nature is far more complex than they ever imagined.

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From the Archives: Elisabeth Schwarzkopf Talks About *Così fan Tutte*

San Francisco Opera first presented Mozart's last *opera buffa*, *Così fan tutte*, in 1956, with the famed German soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf offering the Company its first Fiordiligi. She had already become a favorite here after making her first operatic performances in the United States the previous year with the Company as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* and as Donna

Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. Clearly very much at home in the role of Fiordiligi, she would reprise the role here in 1957, 1960, and 1963. Reviewing her initial 1956 performance of the part, *San Francisco Chronicle* critic Alfred Frankenstein raved:

“She is utterly radiant in person, in voice, and in character, and sings Fiordiligi’s colossal arias with incomparable ease and brilliance. Historians of music are fond of pointing out that the concerto developed from the operatic aria, and Miss Schwarzkopf’s singing is as vivid a confirmation of this fact as we are ever likely to hear. It has the kind of virtuosity one especially associates with the giants of the instrumental world, yet it remains the purest kind of vocalism and is always held in control by a dramatic conception.”



The 1956 San Francisco Opera premiere of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf as Fiordiligi (in foreground) with Lorenzo Alvary as Don Alfonso, Frank Guarrera as Guglielmo, and Nell Rankin as Dorabella. Photo: Robert Lackenbach

Her reprisal in 1960 elicited the kind of praise rarely accorded any performer in a Mozart opera:

“Her walk, her gesture, and the very way she breathes seemed to be individualized with each of her characterizations but as soon as she embarked on Fiordiligi’s big first-act aria one knew precisely who was singing. This and her second-act aria, too—amounted to one of the most

colossal demonstrations of vocalism in the grand style that the San Francisco Opera Company has ever offered.”

In 1979, Schwarzkopf gave an extended interview for San Francisco Opera’s program magazine in which she spoke in depth about about *Così* and the role of Fiordiligi. Here are some excerpts from that interview.

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf came to Fiordiligi relatively late in her career. She first performed *Così fan tutte* on stage at the Piccola Scala in January 1956 under Guido Cantelli, following a celebrated recording with Herbert von Karajan two years earlier. “We had rehearsed for the Karajan so much that when I hear the recording now, I think that most everything is already in there. The Cantelli performances happen to be brilliant—there are pirated tapes—and musically so polished. It was quite incredible, especially since most everyone was performing a role on stage for the first time. The [Karl] Böhm recording came years later [1962] after many Böhm performances in Salzburg. Yes, the two recordings are quite different. I was always ready to modify styles for any conductor. You had to. You did *Don Giovanni* with [Wilhelm] Furtwängler one night and with Karajan the next night. Everything was different. Two different tempi and you had to be two different figures on the stage. A singer has to be ready to do that: you must remember what each conductor wants. It’s part of the equipment of your profession.

“Fiordiligi is such a stylish role. Those ensembles are musically a tremendous joy to perform. I got the first *bazillus*, what do you say, ‘bug?’, to make that marvelous music as an instrument in a chamber group with Karajan. You know the great instrumentalists like [Arthur] Rubinstein say they have learned from the singers and the singers say they learn from the instrumentalists, and it’s true. It’s a wonderful way of learning phrasing. The voice is just another wind instrument you know, perhaps even the most expressive, because you have the words. It’s a wonderful sensation for any musician to feel part of an instrumental ensemble. In *Così* that ensemble feeling comes into play much more than in any other opera.

“The singer must watch herself, because if she doesn’t, she can easily give in to the laughs. For Dorabella, it’s completely different. She’s play-acting from the beginning, so it must be very much overdone. It’s a take-off; she plays the wronged Greek goddess. You have to convey the exaggerated outrage. You must overdo it very much, but without becoming hideous. But in the case of Fioriligi, it’s real emotion. She’s so convinced of her rightness that people will laugh at her, for instance, when she wants to put on the uniform and go out there on the field of battle to find Guglielmo. But these are moments which are true to life, so it’s all right to laugh.



Elisabeth

Schwarzkopf as Fiordiligi with Richard Lewis as Ferrando in San Francisco Opera's 1956 premiere of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. Photo: Robert Lackenbach

“Smanie implacabili” [Dorabella’s Act I aria] is an exaggerated piece, a parody aria, but [Fiordiligi’s aria] “Come scoglio” is not at all. It’s a statement of genuine indignation. Fiordiligi may speak in the manner of the times of the goddesses and so on, but she is indignant; it’s not

play-acting. There are many places in the aria, within a given phrase or even on a given note, where the heart shows through in all its truth. You can hear in the instruments of the orchestra that it's all true, true, true. Her fierceness and pride are not put on, but it has to be done in strong measure to be totally convincing. If the singer doesn't feel the truth of the emotion, it will come over the wrong way.

“*Così* is a very simple story. The action develops out of nowhere—out of a whim of the men as they are sharing a drink. As it develops, the opera shows that playing with love can be dangerous. The true lesson of the opera is that even the strongest character, as Fiordiligi is, eventually can fall.

“Every producer wants to make it more interesting. It's interesting enough. If it's done genuinely and simply and true to the music, you don't have to add an ounce of extra interest or a single gimmick.

“Mozart's characters all have a distinct individuality. And they are not puppets. True, Don Alfonso manipulates them, but they are still very real people being manipulated. The engaged couples are in their 20s and their relationships at the beginning of the opera are strong ones. The trueness of the love music, especially Fiordiligi's, is not that of a teenager. It's the real thing. Have you not heard of people being in love with two persons at the same time, or at least thinking they were? It's all very true to life.

“At the end the women are glad to return to their original fiancées. They must say to themselves, ‘My god, that was a close call, a moment of not knowing where I was going.’ There's a tremendous sense of relief at the end when they are caught in time, before they have succumbed, and can still go back. When they all toast each other in the finale and Ferrando and Fiordiligi crisscross, it should be in the spirit of ‘come on, now. That was it. It's over now and we're on terra firma again. Thank you, and now we're just good friends again.’

“It should dissolve with a *commedia dell'arte* ending—a slight indication of what might have happened, and nothing more than that. The finale is just a framework, a formal summing up of the opera musically and dramatically. I wouldn't put too much psychological stress on it.”



Elisabeth Schwarzkopf as Fiordiligi, Helen Vanni as Dorabella, and Hermann Prey as a disguised Guglielmo in the 1963 revival of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. Photo: Pete Peters

Interviewer Arthur Kaplan asked Schwarzkopf why certain avowed opera lovers who flock to Verdi, Puccini, Wagner and the rest of the standard repertoire don't care for the Mozart operas very much? She pondered a moment and replied, "Perhaps they cannot hear the humanity in it. They think it's all vocal exhibition, glittery and stylized. But it's the innermost human music there is. Only it's on a very high level; it's like being transported into heaven. Although it's not

verismo, it's so true in feeling. I think people should try to raise themselves to that platform occasionally.

“We performers, we are lucky. We must get there. And it's a wonderful thing if you can perform in this realm of music. Many people in the audience come away from a good Mozart performance with the same elated feeling you get when you've been to a great museum and have seen the great masterpieces. The verismo operas don't give you that feeling of elation. I happen to be a mountain lover and it's exactly the same feeling you have when you've been up a mountain. It's like inhaling the purest oxygen.”

Channels:

[Così fan tutte](#)

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Postlude: Note from Matthew Shilvock

When I'm asked about my favorite operas, *Così fan tutte* will often be on my list. Many times, I get a surprised reaction: why not something like *The Marriage of Figaro*? People are curious as to what makes *Così* so compelling for me.

Così fan tutte is arguably the most complex of the Mozart-Da Ponte Trilogy and, from its premiere in 1790 through to the early twentieth century, it failed to resonate with producers or audiences. The plot was avant-garde for the time—a comedy that tests the sanctity of fidelity and shows the bonds of love crumbling with a little too much ease. The intimacy of the piece—six characters in close emotional proximity—brings infidelity into very close relief, and it was maybe too stark for an Enlightenment audience only just coming to terms with the concept that marriage could be for love.

Yet, for me, it is that raw intimacy of emotion that makes *Così* such a profound and successful work. The piece sets up a symmetrical social experiment—a real-time petri dish in which human affections are put under the microscope, albeit in an ethically dubious methodology. The piece pushes far beyond the normal framing devices for operas at the time—myth, history, pastorella—and gives us something very domestic—an opera that could be played out in pretty much any location. The stark immediacy of emotion in *Così* is incredibly compelling.

Another reason it rises to the top for me is how acutely the transformations are made by the characters. They go from a world of absolutes to a world of gray areas. For me “transformation” is hugely important in opera. I gravitate towards pieces where the protagonists finish in a very different place emotionally from where they begin, and *Così* resonates strongly on this front. The four lovers undergo huge life lessons and personal growth. Those lessons in *Così* are sometimes critiqued for being misogynistic and they certainly can be if the men are given all the agency. But what I love about our new production is that director Michael Cavanagh allows this to sit in the gray area of human emotion. For all the lovers, the piece is about learning the ache of love, the consequences of emotion, and the repercussions of cynicism. At the end of the opera and particularly in this production, the lovers leave irreparably changed by what they have endured, opera mirroring life.

And then there’s the music. Like the story, the music embodies a very special place in Mozart’s output. It blends his ability for comic propulsion (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*, *The Marriage of Figaro*) with the gravitas of his *opera seria* (*Idomeneo*, *La Clemenza di Tito*) and, in doing so it beautifully overlays the theatrical masks of comedy and tragedy. The opera was written in 1790, in Mozart’s penultimate year. For Mozart, it is not appropriate to talk about “late style” as his late came far too soon. But it does come from that period where Mozart was experimenting with a new romantic simplicity, a simplicity that was to find voice in works like the *Ave verum corpus*, the clarinet concerto, and some of his Masonic music. There are sublime parts of *Così* that represent that stylistic journey, particularly in the ensembles where time stands still and our protagonists try to make sense of the world swirling around them.

Operas allow *us* to make sense of *our* world, and in its achingly beautiful lyricism, in the ambiguity of its emotive journeys, and in the stark intimacy of human life on stage, *Così fan tutte* stands tall for me as one of the great musical keys to the human soul.

1

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[Così fan tutte](#)

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2021–22 Artists

PRINCIPAL ARTISTS

- Zhengyi Bai †^
- Jamie Barton
- *Corey Bix*
- Ben Bliss *
- John Brancy
- Nicole Cabell
- Nicole Car *
- Arturo Chacón-Cruz ^
- *Dominick Chenes* *
- Karen Chia-ling Ho
- *Alice Chung**
- Christopher Colmenero †^
- James Creswell ^
- Etienne Dupuis *
- Stefan Egerstrom *†^
- Michael Fabiano
- Ferruccio Furlanetto
- Christina Gansch
- Carmen Giannattasio
- Greer Grimsley
- Sarah Cambridge °^
- Nicole Heaston
- Soloman Howard
- *Rhoslyn Jones* °^
- Hyona Kim
- *Sabina Kim**
- Anne-Marie MacIntosh *^†
- Simone McIntosh ^†
- Timothy Murray *^†

- Christopher Oglesby ^{^†}
- Amitai Pati ^{°^}
- Ailyn Pérez [^]
- Luca Pisaroni
- Irene Roberts
- Yijie Shi
- *Philip Skinner* ^{°^}
- Joel Sorensen
- Elisa Sunshine ^{*^†}
- Russell Thomas
- Esther Tonea ^{*^†}
- Dale Travis ^{°^}
- Elza van den Heever ^{°^}
- Alfred Walker
- Rachel Willis-Sørensen
- Hongni Wu ^{*}
- Guang Yang
- Adela Zaharia ^{*}
- Meigui Zhang ^{*^}

CONDUCTORS

- Darrell Ang ^{*}
- Bertrand de Billy ^{*}
- Eun Sun Kim
- Henrik Nánási

STAGE DIRECTORS

- Michael Cavanagh
- Jose Maria Condemi
- Stan Lai
- Shawna Lucey
- Matthew Ozawa

KEY:

* San Francisco Opera Debut

** U.S. Debut

° Former Adler Fellow

† Current Adler Fellow

^ Former Merola Opera Program participant

Cover Artist

Supernumeraries

San Francisco Opera

Fall 2021 Così fan tutte Supernumeraries

- Ivan Navarro
- Matheus Coura

San Francisco Opera extends its gratitude and appreciation to the following labor organizations whose members, artists, craftsmen, and craftswomen greatly contribute to our performances:

American Federation of Musicians, Local 6

American Guild of Musical Artists, Inc.

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local 16

Theatrical Wardrobe Union, Local 784, I.A.T.S.E Make-Up Artists and Hair Stylists Union, Local 706, I.A.T.S.E.

The Art Directors Guild & Scenic, Title and Graphic Artists Local 800

United Scenic Artists Local Usa – 829, I.A.T.S.E.

Box Office and Front of House Employees Union, Local B-18



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San Francisco Opera is so grateful to our incredible family of donors who help us continue to bring the transformative power of opera to the Bay Area and beyond. We are delighted to be able to recognize our donors at the following online donor listings pages:

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The Merola Opera Program extends our sincere appreciation to all our donors and acknowledge the following individuals, foundations and corporations for their generous support.

[Merola Opera Program Supporters](#)

San Francisco Opera Guild extends our sincere appreciation to all our event and program supporters and acknowledge the following individuals, corporations, and foundations for their generous support.

Production Sponsor Spotlights



Photo: Terrence McCarthy

Cynthia and John Gunn

Once again, the unprecedented generosity of Cynthia and John Gunn has set the stage for a dazzling season at San Francisco Opera. Since 2002, when John joined the Opera Board, the couple has underwritten numerous productions and provided exceptional support for many of the Company’s innovative endeavors. In September 2008, the Gunns made a historic commitment—believed to be the largest gift ever made by individuals to an American opera company—to help fund the signature projects of General Director David Gockley, including new operas and productions, multimedia projects, and outreach programs, and they have proudly continued that support for General Director Matthew Shilvock. This season, the Gunns’ inspired generosity is helping make possible six productions—*Tosca*, *Live and in Concert: The Homecoming*, *Fidelio*, *Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Dream of the Red Chamber*. 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.



Carol Franc Buck Foundation

Carol Franc Buck has generously supported the arts for more than forty years as a benefactor and a patron, and she claims her love of opera as the impetus for a commitment to the arts. With a

mission to support the visual and performing arts in the western region of the country, the Carol Franc Buck Foundation was created in 1979, providing major underwriting and production grants to the opera companies of San Francisco, Houston, Portland, Nevada, and Arizona, as well as many others. She is the youngest child of Frank and Eva Buck, a well-known agricultural, entrepreneurial, and political family in California history, from whom she learned the values associated with contributing to and working in one's community. Born in San Francisco, Ms. Buck grew up in and around Vacaville at a time when it was a small rural ranching area. She attended Stanford University, graduating cum laude with a degree in history. She has served as the president of the Carol Franc Buck Foundation since its inception, was an original director of the Frank and Eva Buck Foundation, and has served as a director of the Buck Center on Aging in Marin County, CA. She has also been a board member of San Francisco Opera since 1981. Ms. Buck has one son, Christian P. Erdman, also a trustee of the Nevada-based Foundation, who resides in Wyoming with his wife, Jacqui. Ms. Buck's granddaughter, Mackenzie, is also a trustee of the Foundation and lives in San Francisco. Ms. Buck places value on the arts that flourish from her unwavering commitment: "The support that we have been able to give has absolutely enriched my life."



Photo: Jeff Farber

Koret Foundation

San Francisco Opera is deeply grateful for Koret Foundation's longtime support. Koret's funding of *Così fan tutte* is part of a three-year grant to support the revival and restaging of classical operas which also included *Tosca* (2018) and *The Marriage of Figaro* (2019). Koret also sponsored this season's *Fidelio* which was part of the Foundation's initiative to help performing arts space reopen safely and welcome back audiences to our regions' pillar cultural venues.

"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 thrilled to see audiences back enjoying world-class productions from the San Francisco Opera, and celebrating the vibrant arts scene that helps our region thrive," says Jeffrey A. Farber, Koret Foundation CEO.



Bernard & Barbro Osher

A native of Maine, Bernard Osher became involved with San Francisco Opera as a subscriber 50 years ago, shortly after moving here from New York. He and his wife Barbro, a native of Sweden, have supported every aspect of the Company's work, from artist appearances to production facilities. Established in 1977, The Bernard Osher Foundation has funded virtually

every major arts organization in the area, including youth programs. Higher education initiatives include scholarships for community college students in California and Maine and for baccalaureate students at universities in every state and the District of Columbia; Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes serving seasoned adults on 123 campuses nationwide; and Osher Centers for Integrative Medicine at six of the nation's leading medical schools and at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden. Bernard is a longstanding member of the Opera's Board of Directors, serving on the Chairman's Council. Barbro is Honorary Consul General of Sweden for California and serves as Chairman of the Board of the Osher Foundation.



Photo: Drew Alitzer

Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem / Conductors Fund

After a career devoted to his publishing businesses in Japan and Europe, the creation of Clos Pegase Winery in California's Napa Valley, and his art collection, Jan Shrem, in joyous partnership with his wife Maria Manetti Shrem, is bringing his focus and affection to philanthropic causes that advance education and the performing and visual arts. Though they grew up half-a-world apart, Jan and Maria both developed a love of opera at a young age. While their lives led them each around the globe, their individual passions eventually led them to San Francisco Opera and to each other. As Company Sponsors for nearly a decade, Jan and Maria have established four generous funds. The Conductors Fund helps ensure the continued

appearances of noted conductors in the orchestra pit. The Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund helps bring today's most compelling artists in Italian repertoire to San Francisco Opera, the Emerging Stars Fund supports the Company in showcasing exciting rising young stars on our stage throughout the season, and the Luminaries Concert Fund enables San Francisco Opera to bring legendary artists to the stage for special events and performances. Maria and Jan are thrilled to be part of bringing this new production of *Così fan tutte* to San Francisco Opera's stage.



Photo: Drew Alitzer

Joan Traitel/Great Singers Fund (Sponsor, Nicole Cabell and Ferrucico Furlanetto)

“Without great singers, opera is not all it could be,” says San Francisco Opera board member Joan Traitel. “That’s why my late husband and I approached David Gockley with the idea of creating a special way of supporting singers exclusively.” The result was the Great Singers Fund, launched by the Traitels in 2008 to provide San Francisco Opera with enhanced support to attract the world’s best singers. Joan, a member of the Opera’s board of directors since 1998, and her late husband, David, were production sponsors for several years before founding the Great Singers Fund. “The Fund makes a difference in the quality of opera in San Francisco,” Joan explains. “I am thrilled to sponsor Nicole Cabell and Ferrucico Furlanetto. I hope people see the relationship between the Great Singers Fund and this season’s fantastic lineup. Your support

truly can make a difference! These amazing artists make an evening special, and at the end you walk away happy.”



Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for New Productions

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 *Così fan tutte* 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 sponsorship support of *The Makropulos Case* (2010), *The Flying Dutchman* (2013), *Two Women* (2015), and sponsorship of this season's *Fidelio*, *Così fan tutte* and *Don Giovanni*.

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