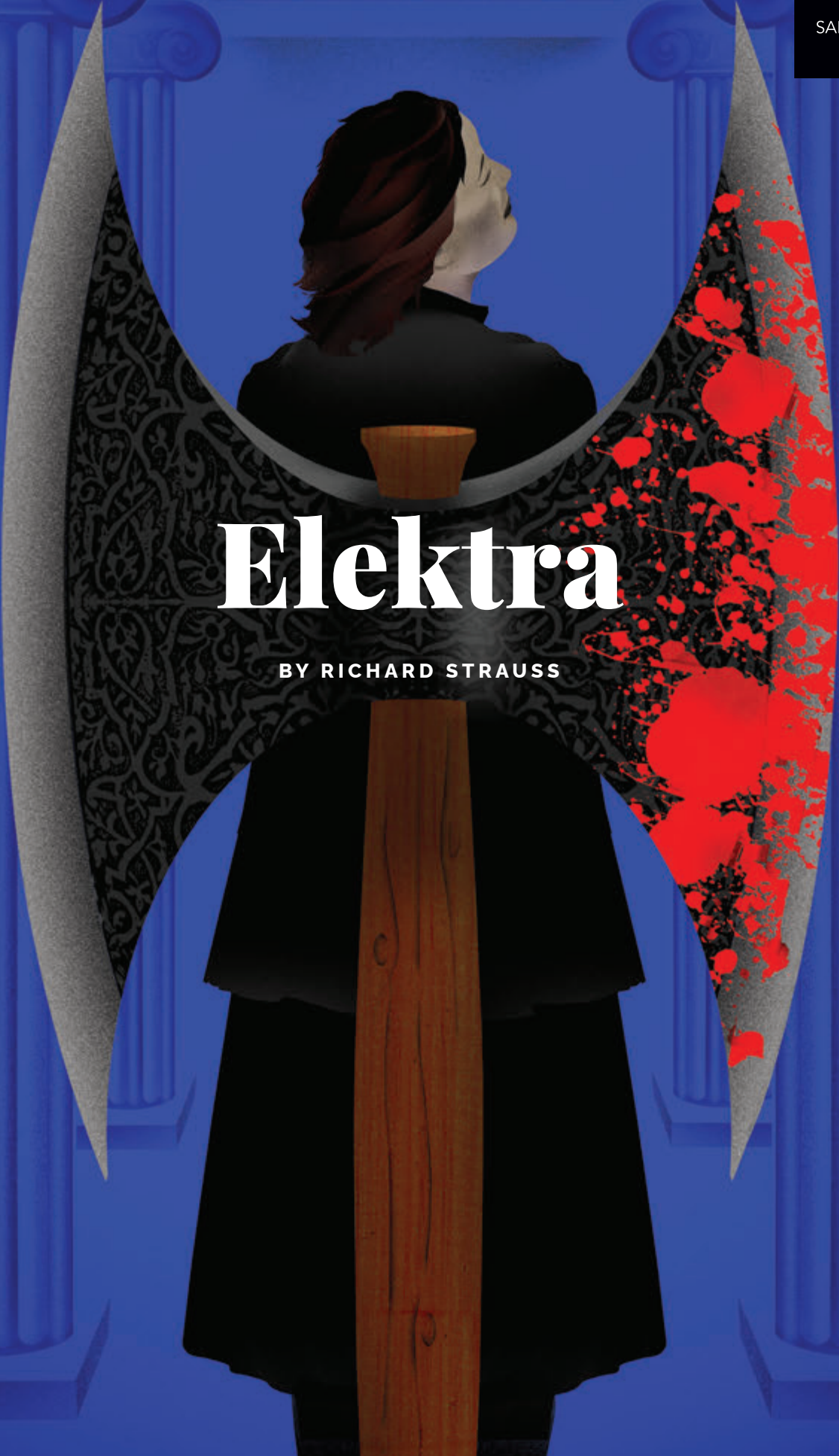


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Elektra

BY RICHARD STRAUSS

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Vol. 103, No. 7 • 2025–26 Season • Summer 2026

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AT A GLANCE AND SYNOPSIS

Get *Elektra* details quickly on pages 5 and 34.

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The Barber of Seville

MUSIC BY **GIOACHINO ROSSINI** • LIBRETTO BY **CESARE STERBINI**

Structure: 2 acts, with one intermission

Running time: 3 hours, 10 mins

Language: Sung in Italian with English supertitles

Key Characters:

- *Figaro*, Seville's barber and resident jack-of-all-trades
- *Count Almaviva*, a nobleman in love with Rosina
- *Rosina*, the charming ward of Doctor Bartolo
- *Doctor Bartolo*, a curmudgeonly physician who plans to marry Rosina

The Barber of Seville (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) follows the charismatic barber, Figaro, as he helps a pair of young lovers—the Count (disguised as Lindoro) and Rosina—to outwit Rosina's overbearing guardian and be together. Comedy generally proves less durable than tragedy (what is funny to one

generation can become dated or even offensive over time), but Rossini created a timeless work that is as relatable and funny today as when it was introduced in 1816. His inimitable talent for melody was firing on all cylinders when he composed the opera in just 13 days, resulting in such hit tunes as Figaro's famous aria "Largo al factotum," Rosina's "Una voce poco fa," the Count's *pièce de résistance* "Cessa di più resistere," and the comedic trio "Zitti, zitti, piano, piano"—any one of which audiences might be heard whistling as they leave the theater.

Listen for:

The style of music sung by each character in the opera reveals much about who they are and what they desire. In her entrance aria, "Una voce poco fa," Rosina's firework *coloratura* (many notes sung on a single syllable) shows her passionate nature and love for Lindoro. Bartolo, on the other hand, often sings with rapid-fire patter (one note per syllable) betraying his arrogance.

Elektra

MUSIC BY **RICHARD STRAUSS** • LIBRETTO BY **HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL**

Structure: 1 act, no intermission

Running time: 1 hour, 45 minutes

Language: Sung in German with English supertitles

Key Characters:

- *Elektra*, daughter of Agamemnon, who is consumed with avenging his death
- *Chrysothemis*, Elektra's sister
- *Klytemnestra*, Elektra's mother, responsible for Agamemnon's murder
- *Orest*, Elektra's brother who is thought to be dead

The ancient Greek tragedy *Electra* presents a heinous act—the murder of King Agamemnon by his wife and her lover Aegisth—as a crime against family, community, and the gods. Informed by contemporary studies of the human unconscious, Strauss and Hofmannsthal's 1909 opera reimagines the story through the lens of psychological trauma and the title heroine's obsession with vengeance. Strauss' score employs pounding rhythms,

dissonance, and overwhelming sound to convey Elektra's frayed sanity and the building tension of impending violence.

Director Keith Warner said, "On one hand, *Elektra* is really an amazingly complex, deep piece, and on the other it is an almost horror movie kind of thriller. We have decided to set the piece in a modern museum where a girl is going through and reading about Sophocles' Electra and Carl Jung's Electra complex. The artifacts and information trigger a series of memories in her, and we go back into her story. She must confront the truth by confronting the terrible events that started this whole chain reaction of murder and mayhem."

Did you know?

With nearly 100 instrumental parts, *Elektra* features one of the largest orchestrations of any work in the operatic repertoire. When San Francisco Opera first presented the opera in 1938, the orchestra pit of the still-new Opera House (opened in 1932) was expanded under the stage to accommodate all of the musicians. That space is today called the "Torpedo Room" for its shape and how it resembles the inside of a submarine.

A man with wavy brown hair and a light beard is the central figure. He is wearing a dark blue blazer over a dark green button-down shirt. He is standing on a rooftop, with his hands clasped in front of him. On his left wrist, he wears a watch with a blue dial and a dark strap. A ring is visible on his left hand. The background shows a city skyline at sunset, with buildings silhouetted against a sky of orange and pink clouds.

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WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Welcome to the summer season of San Francisco Opera! The last time this theatre was reverberating with opera was November with our world premiere of *The Monkey King* and our new production of *Parsifal*. It is exciting to propel from that energy into the summer and beyond. The company is experiencing thrilling trends: subscriptions are increasing, audiences are getting younger and returning more frequently, and we are seeing major new philanthropic donor relationships. Since the gold rush, this community has been passionate about opera, and that continues unabated!

Our summer season showcases two great operas: Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Richard Strauss' *Elektra*. *The Barber of Seville* marks the first time this deliciously crafted comedy has been on our stage since 2015, although we did have our ground-breaking drive-in version in 2021. *Barber* returns with two spectacular casts under the baton of Benjamin Manis who was with us last season for *Carmen*, and in Emilio Sagi's production that evokes the sultry energy of Seville, replete with flamenco.

From heartfelt comedy we head into the intensity of *Elektra*. Eun Sun Kim leads her first Strauss opera with the company and what a Strauss work it is! Its orchestra of nearly a hundred players is the largest ensemble of any standard repertory piece, and the impact of that is a work of such visceral intensity that you'll feel right in the vortex of the blood-lust world of vengeance of the House of Atreus. Keith Warner's acclaimed production is a "Night at the Museum" interpretation, and we're excited to have it back on our stage.

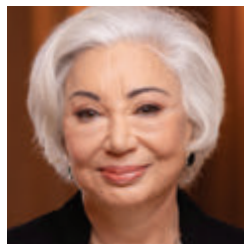
And then, on June 26 the *Pride Concert* returns in a celebration of the LGBTQIA+ community, emceed by the incomparable Sapphira Cristal once again, and featuring a fabulous trio of soloists.

Thank you for being a part of this exciting summer of opera, and a part of the San Francisco Opera Family. Great things are happening in this theatre and we're so grateful for all you do to make extraordinary art possible in this community.

With warmest wishes,



Barbara A. Wolfe
Chair of the Board
San Francisco Opera Association



Jack Calhoun
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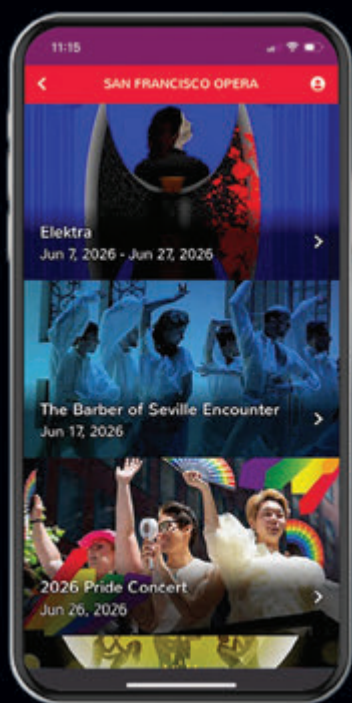
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San Francisco Opera at Your Fingertips

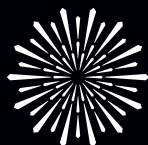
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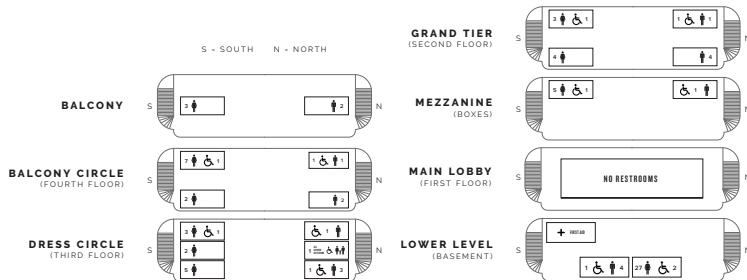
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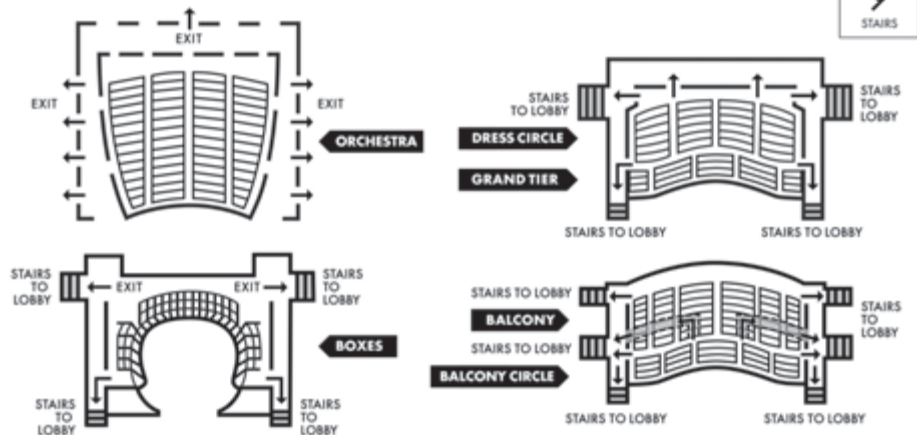
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The San Francisco War Memorial acknowledges that we are on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone who are the original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula. As guests, we recognize that we benefit from living and working on their traditional homeland. We wish to pay our respects by acknowledging the ancestors, elders, and relatives of the Ramaytush Community and by affirming their sovereign rights as First Peoples.

Jensen & Lori Huang



KRISTEN LOKEN

At a special *Monkey King* event hosted by Jensen and Lori Huang in the Green Room at the War Memorial Veterans Building, the Huangs announced a multi-year commitment of \$5 million a year to San Francisco Opera to support its artistic work and the San Francisco artist community. This year their gift will help underwrite the Opera’s acclaimed production of composer Huang Ruo and librettist David Henry Hwang’s *The Monkey King*. In subsequent seasons, the gift will support the creative vitality of the Company including mainstage operas, young artist training, community programming such as the *Bohème Out of the Box* series, and digital media initiatives, allowing San Francisco Opera to build on record ticket sales, new audiences, and an exciting creative momentum.

With this extraordinary commitment, the Huangs join the Opera’s Company Sponsors, a group of 18 households who provide seven-figure support for the Company through both annual gifts and through draws on their endowment funds. Jensen Huang, founder and CEO of NVIDIA, said: “San Francisco is home to innovation and

imagination. We are delighted to partner with and support the San Francisco Opera—one of the city’s greatest anchors of culture and the arts.”

Matthew Shilvock, General Director of San Francisco Opera remarked: “I am profoundly grateful to Jensen and Lori Huang and their family for this breathtaking commitment to San Francisco Opera. At this exciting moment when San Francisco is reverberating with the extraordinary possibilities of tech innovation, this gift shows what is possible when the technology and arts sectors join together to propel forward creativity. This is a great affirmation of the cultural vitality of the Bay Area, and I am overjoyed to be taking the creativity of the Company forward with Jensen and Lori’s heartfelt partnership.”

As Co-Chairs of *The Monkey King* Honorary Committee (a group of leaders from the business, nonprofit, tech, and cultural sectors formed to serve as ambassadors for this major new work), the Huangs have been an instrumental part of one of the most successful artistic undertakings in the Company’s recent history.

Marieke & Jeff Rothschild



NOAH BERGER

“**T**he central theme of our philanthropy has been to have a positive impact on the lives of others who have not had the opportunities and good fortune we have enjoyed,” note Marieke and Jeff Rothschild. As new champions of San Francisco Opera, they are doing precisely that.

“Marieke and I were raised with the expectation that one should participate in philanthropy, and we feel very fortunate to be able to engage at the scale, scope, and impact that our success has enabled,” remarks Jeff. “We are attracted to projects that have the potential for meaningful and enduring social impact.”

The Rothschilds’ philanthropic investments span health care, education, economic development, and land preservation. They are equally passionate about art. “Great art is something that you need to have a good life,” reflects Marieke. “You could live without beauty, but why would you?”

Live performance is especially close to their hearts. “We come together, taking time out of our busy lives, for

this shared experience,” Marieke explains. “The lights go down, there is a hush. Talented people work in harmony to create something extraordinary for us. By the end, we are all changed. Live music is life affirming.”

The Rothschilds’ commitment to San Francisco Opera comes at a critical moment of inflection for the Company. “Marieke and Jeff are propelling forward the Opera, allowing us to remain bold and courageous in our programming, our innovations, and our community engagement,” observes General Director Matthew Shilvock. “Their philanthropy is a wonderful exemplar of a soaring vision that uplifts the Bay Area. I am profoundly grateful for the trust they are placing in us to produce art that showcases the creative vitality of San Francisco on the global stage.”

“San Francisco Opera is at an interesting crossroads,” Marieke concludes. “I like that they are willing to take chances, to think outside of the box. To adapt this old art form to the modern world requires new audiences and new directions, and we find those here.”

John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn



TERRENCE MCCARTHY

San Francisco Opera shines as a beacon of innovation, both on and off the stage, driven by the visionary leadership of John and Cynthia Gunn. Their unwavering dedication to creative and cultural initiatives ensures that San Francisco Opera remains one of the world's premier stages. Their philanthropic leadership to the Opera includes a historic contribution in 2008, believed at that time to be the most significant gift ever made by individuals to an American opera company.

A Bay Area native, John's love for opera began in high school through his friendship with Ronald Adler, son of former General Director of San Francisco Opera Kurt Herbert Adler. John would attend dress rehearsals with Ronald, sitting in the General Director's box. After graduating from Stanford, John began a distinguished career at investment company, Dodge & Cox. There, his belief in long-term investing, empowering management style, and down-to-earth sensibility became benchmarks in the field. John joined the Opera Board in 2002, becoming Chair in 2008, a position he held for sixteen years, during which he made an extraordinary impact on the Company's creative vitality and organizational

stability. In 2024, he assumed the role of Chair Emeritus.

Cynthia Gunn, also an alum of Stanford, began her career as editor and director of the highly regarded *Portable Stanford* series, in which she edited nearly thirty volumes by some of the university's most brilliant minds. Cynthia's philanthropic leadership in the Bay Area includes serving as a Trustee of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, as well as a number of other boards spanning philanthropy, health, education, and the arts.

John and Cynthia's dedication to the Opera reflects their shared belief that a great city deserves a world-class opera company that leads the art form and takes bold risks to advance society. Their philanthropic leadership has enabled some of the most significant artistic projects on the San Francisco stage for over two decades, ensuring vital investments in the Company's infrastructure, including the automation and rigging system, as well as the Opera's media suite.

San Francisco Opera is privileged to have the leadership of John and Cynthia, a partnership that began with a high school visit to dress rehearsals and that has blossomed into one of the most defining philanthropic partnerships in American cultural history.

Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem

Production Sponsor, *The Barber of Seville*



Jan and Maria each cultivated a love of opera from a young age, although they grew up half a world apart. After a distinguished career in publishing in Japan and Europe, Jan Shrem founded Clos Pegase Winery in California's Napa Valley, where he assembled an extraordinary collection of modern and contemporary art. Maria Manetti Shrem achieved international success with her fashion-based entrepreneurial ventures, introducing Gucci and Fendi to major department and specialty stores across the United States. In joyous partnership, the Manetti Shrems have devoted their shared passion and focus to philanthropic causes that advance education, the performing and visual arts, and medical research and care.

Although their lives led them around the globe, their individual passions ultimately brought them to San Francisco Opera—and to each other. As Company Sponsors for more than a decade, Jan and Maria have established four generous funds:

- The Conductors Fund, which helps ensure the continued appearances of distinguished conductors on the podium.
- The Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund, which brings today's most compelling artists in the Italian repertoire to San Francisco Opera.
- The Emerging Stars Fund, which supports the

Company in showcasing exciting, rising young artists throughout the season.

- The Luminaries Concert Fund, which enables San Francisco Opera to present legendary artists for special events and performances.

In December 2022, Maria received The Spirit of the Opera award for her devotion to San Francisco Opera, her exceptional commitment to advancing the Company's success, and her sustained support of the art form. She is the 2023 UC Davis Medal recipient, honored for her profound arts legacy and her passion for fostering exploration and education. In April 2024, Maria made history by donating eight endowments to create an Arts District at the UC Davis College of Letters and Science—the most significant gift in the college's history—ensuring that the arts and humanities are protected in perpetuity and benefiting more than 30,000 students each year, along with top faculty, emerging talents, and world-renowned artists. She is also the 2025 recipient of San Francisco Opera Guild's Crescendo Award.

Her visionary leadership continues to shape the cultural landscape and enrich lives across the globe. Jan Shrem, revered for his generosity and vision, passed away in September 2024 at the age of 94. He is remembered for his philanthropic spirit, and Maria carries the torch forward into San Francisco Opera's future.

Anne Popkin



“Opera reminds us of our shared humanity,” remarks Anne Popkin. “Through love, heartbreak, conflict, and forgiveness, opera reflects the entire emotional spectrum of life. And one gets to share that experience with the others in the audience.”

Anne’s philanthropy centers on education, the arts, medicine, and the environment. On moving to the Bay Area in 2011, she quickly became involved with San Francisco Opera. In 2014, she joined the Opera’s Board, and in 2016 she made a significant gift to the Opera’s Endowment to create programs focused on expanding new audiences. Named for her father, who first introduced her to opera, the Jordan Joseph Popkin Opera Outreach Fund is dedicated to her mission.

“The Fund reflects two priorities,” Anne notes. “It enables people from all walks of life to know and fall in love with opera. And it enables the Opera to create annual and longer-term programs to address audience expansion using income the gift generates every year.”

Anne’s inspired leadership is expanding San Francisco Opera’s goal to develop new audiences and augment future programming. She is clear about her purpose. “Opera is for everyone. Here, we create exceptional art,” she reflects. “This is our guiding star. But we also have another mission: to bring the experience of opera to the broader Bay Area and its residents, to people who may not otherwise find themselves at the Opera. Donating to our Endowment is one way for me to further that mission.”

Donor Spotlight



DREW ALTIZER PHOTOGRAPHY

Jerome & Thao Dodson (Production Sponsor, *The Barber of Seville*)

“A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust, and a hearty, ‘Hi-Yo, Silver!’” Those words, accompanied by the galloping excitement of Rossini’s *William Tell* Overture, transfixed a young Jerry Dodson as he listened to *The Lone Ranger* on the family radio in Oak Park, Illinois. Just as Bugs Bunny’s *Rabbit of Seville* had done for many, a lighthearted entertainment sparked a future operatic devotion.

That little boy grew up to attend Berkeley in the ‘60s, serve with the American Embassy in Vietnam where he and Thao met, and attend Harvard Business School. Eventually, the couple married, settled in the Bay Area, and raised a family. In the 1980s, Jerry was a pioneer in the field of socially responsible investing with little interest in opera. But in 1992, when San Francisco Opera decided to celebrate Rossini’s bicentennial with the rarely performed *Guillaume Tell* (*William Tell*), Thao, already an opera lover, suggested to Jerry that they go.

William Tell was praised for its striking Mansouri production, and the Dodsons began attending regularly. They became season ticket holders in 1999 and supporters, “in a small way,” as Jerry puts it. A friendship with David Gockley, which endures to this day, led to a larger role as Company Sponsors. “I so admired what he did for the opera, but it was not very good for my pocketbook,” Jerry laughs. Jerry also lends his financial expertise to the audit committee.

In 2016, Dodson considered the import of Gockley’s departure. He met with Matthew Shilvock and joined the Board that year. “We hit it off right away!” Jerry says. He felt a similar affinity with Keith Geeslin, then president of the San Francisco Opera Association. Eager to continue support, the Dodsons see this as a perfect time to revitalize and energize the Company within the San Francisco community. The initial fire ignited by *William Tell* continues to burn brightly.



DREW ALTIZER PHOTOGRAPHY

Bernard & Barbro Osher (Production Sponsor, *Elektra*)

A native of Maine, Bernard Osher became involved with San Francisco Opera as a subscriber over 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 to audience building programs. 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 adults on 125 campuses nationwide; and Osher Centers for Integrative Health at 10 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. Together they recently established the Osher Audience of the Future Fund, which gives San Francisco Opera an incredible resource to connect art and audiences together in new ways, ensuring that the Osher Theatre (the War Memorial auditorium) remains a vibrant, energized, and full-to-the-rafters building in which to experience transformational opera.



Dr. William & Mrs. Bridget Coughran Jr. (Production Sponsor, *Elektra*)

Dr. William and Mrs. Bridget Coughran Jr. have been supporters of San Francisco Opera for a number of years, following their time in the New York metro area where they attended performances at the Metropolitan Opera. William has dedicated decades to the technology industry and, for the Opera, he serves on the board and held the position of treasurer during the challenging COVID period. They share a particular passion for Germanic composers such as Mozart and Wagner, believing that the profound emotion conveyed by opera offers a vital connection to our individual humanity.

Joining the Chorus of Support

Opera is built on partnership! Behind every performance is a community of supporters who make it possible, each with their own reason for stepping forward. Here, you'll meet members of our donor family who have recently deepened their commitment to San Francisco Opera. Their journeys are personal, but together they reflect a shared belief that opera matters, now and for the future. Their generosity ensures that this extraordinary art form continues to inspire, connect, and thrive.



Bill Bennington: “To electively pursue excellence in an extremely complicated art form is a ridiculous challenge. But the end result is extraordinary. At the Opera House, I experience something greater than myself, even as opera, for all of its ‘bigness,’ mostly focuses on things we all understand: love, joy, death.

“Whether it be in art or sports or any human endeavor, if someone does something extremely well, I appreciate it. Doing something well is its own reward, it speaks to our soul.

“I grew up with a lot of music in the house. I play the piano, and my daughters are deeply involved with music. I’ve enjoyed live performances for years, and now I want to pay it forward.

“Matthew Shilvock said to me recently, ‘We are bringing opera of transcendent impact to life.’ to which I replied, ‘Yes, we are.’ It is a pleasure for me to support San Francisco Opera, knowing that my gift will help us to enjoy this remarkable art form today and well into the future.”



Adnan & Sharmeen Iqbal are San Francisco Bay Area natives who are new to opera and the Company. They first explored San Francisco Opera when their daughter developed an interest in singing and theater. “She has blossomed on stage, landing lead roles and finding her voice,” says Sharmeen. “We appreciate San Francisco Opera’s efforts to serve young people and diverse communities, especially those unfamiliar with opera.”

“We’re fortunate to support many impactful projects,” Adnan adds. “But art is as important as anything. At a time when the world pushes us to focus on differences, art reminds us how much we share.”

Sharmeen agrees: “Everyone understands pain, love and joy—emotions that transcend culture and background. Art creates lasting community and understanding.”

Looking ahead, Adnan reflects, “This is a meet-the-moment opportunity. We see it in our daughters and their peers, who seek calm and grounding in a world competing for their attention. The stream of bite-sized content rarely fosters stillness. San Francisco Opera offers something profoundly different: a place to pause, reflect and be present.”



Nick Munson and Danny Walinsky: Nick’s connection connection to San Francisco Opera began in high school as an enthralled audience member, sparking a lifelong dedication to the performing arts. Nick believes opera is the ultimate performance medium, a seamless blend of soaring vocals, music, and design that pulls at human emotion like no other.

Since moving to San Francisco, he has found a community within BRAVO! Club, where he now serves on the Executive Committee as Nominations Chair. Alongside his husband, Danny Walinsky, a software engineer and designer, they are proud to support the Company as members of Orpheus. Together, they believe the Opera is a cultural cornerstone where the community gathers to be moved, challenged, and inspired.

Outside the operahouse, Nick balances a career as an HR leader, yoga instructor, and time with his husband and their dog, Augustus, enjoying the vibrant community of San Francisco.

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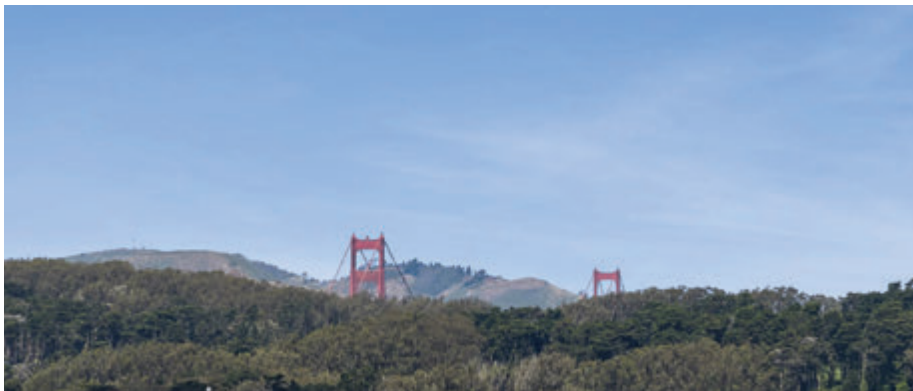
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SCAN TO GIVE

Members of the 2025 cast for Puccini's *La Bohème* take a bow: Andrea Carroll (Musetta), Pene Pati (Rodolfo), Karen Chia-ling Ho (Mimi), and Lucas Meachem (Marcello). Photo by Cory Weaver

Donor Spotlight



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Madeleine H. Russell (supporting Madeleine H. Russell Night at the Opera)

The Madeleine H. Russell Night at the Opera honors a remarkable philanthropist whose passion for social justice, education, and the arts continues to shape future generations. Through a \$1,000,000 endowment from the Columbia Foundation in 2000, students from across the community are invited to attend San Francisco Opera rehearsals at no cost, many experiencing opera for the very first time. For these students, the evening is more than a night out; it is an introduction to the power of live performance, where music, storytelling, and design come together in a deeply moving way. A former board member of San Francisco Opera, Mrs. Russell believed in expanding access and opportunity. This program carries her vision forward, opening the doors of the Opera House to young audiences and ensuring they can see themselves as part of its future.

BEL CANTO SPOTLIGHT

Barbara Moller Lyons: A Life in Harmony

We are grateful to those who remember San Francisco Opera through a legacy gift. This crucial support strengthens and ensures the future of opera. We recognize with deep appreciation Barbara Moller Lyons, a Bel Canto Legacy Society member whose recent legacy gift made a profound impact on the Company this season.



Barbara Moller Lyons did not merely attend the Opera; she lived it. A native daughter of the Bay Area, her journey into the world of performance began at Mills College. There, she earned her degree in Music, Speech, and Drama—a trifecta of disciplines that would become the overture to a lifelong devotion to the stage.

Her connection to San Francisco Opera was both professional and deeply personal. In the early years of her career, she served as a sophisticated voice for the Company in public relations. Yet, Barbara's true calling was not just behind the scenes but within the music itself.

Upon retiring from the business world, she stepped into the spotlight as a professional singer. Her soaring soprano graced church aisles, opened ceremonies for the Junior Chamber of Commerce at the Opera House, and reached a national stage when she performed "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the 1964 Republican National Convention.

Barbara was the embodiment of San Francisco elegance. Always dressed to perfection, she moved through life with a blend of grace and aplomb. For Barbara, the Opera was a communal joy; she was rarely seen in her regular seat without a close friend by her side, eager to share the magic of a rising curtain.

Through her steadfast generosity during her lifetime and a profound legacy gift upon her passing, Barbara ensured that the music would never fall silent. Her bequest helps to secure the future of San Francisco Opera, allowing new generations to experience the same transcendence and beauty that defined her storied life.



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Elektra

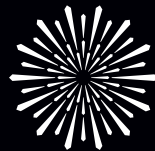
**OPERA IN ONE ACT BY RICHARD STRAUSS
LIBRETTO BY HUGO VAN HOFMANNSTHAL**

This production is made possible, in part, by
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originally created by San Francisco Opera,
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JUNE 7, 11, 14, 19, 23, 27, 2026



**SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA**

Elektra

We are in a contemporary museum. At closing time a visitor hides herself inside. She becomes obsessed with understanding the ancient Greek myth on display: the fall of the house of Atreus—a family steeped in generations of ill deeds, guilt, and revenge. These wrongs have been exacerbated by Agamemnon giving up his own daughter Iphigenia, as a human blood-sacrifice to the gods. The visitor obsessively rewatches a film that has been showing in the museum: it details maidservants performing a human sacrifice, while gossiping about Elektra, a daughter of the house, who has been driven crazy by the deeds done to her father. Only one of the women present comes to the defense of the much-abused Elektra; her punishment for such compassion is to become the sacrificial victim. This myth seems so resonant to the visitor that the film comes alive to her. The visitor, someone also in mourning, becomes Elektra.

Elektra invokes the memory of her father, Agamemnon. She recalls how, having returned from the war, he was murdered in his bath by Klytemnestra, his wife and Elektra's mother, aided by her lover, Aegisth. Elektra begs her father to show himself and promises, invoking her long-lost brother, Orest, and her sister Chrysothemis to avenge his death by making blood sacrifices. Agamemnon appears to her: murder victim, father, and demi-god.

Chrysothemis tells Elektra that Klytemnestra and Aegisth plan to lock Elektra up. She begs her to resist the urge of revenge: only then, she says, will they be allowed out of this "prison" of a home. Chrysothemis craves a normal life with a lover and children. Elektra, at first intrigued by her sister's vision of a normal life, ultimately remains unmoved. Klytemnestra and her entourage are heard approaching. Chrysothemis passes on the gossip that Klytemnestra has been having nightmares about the return of her son, Orest, who was banished in infancy. Klytemnestra and her fawning servants enter; Elektra confronts her with a calm, cruel irony. Klytemnestra dismisses her servants and stays alone with her daughter. Her sleep at night has been racked with nightmares. Klytemnestra graphically describes her dreams, which feature images of putrid carcasses and maggots, and a torch whose flickering mocks her. Blood must flow, she says, before these dreams can end. Elektra begins to taunt her mother with talk of an appropriate ritual sacrifice, to be enacted by a stranger but mysteriously one who also comes from the house. Elektra terrifies Klytemnestra with increasingly lurid threats: she will be pursued through the bedroom, bathroom, stairways, and

cellars of the house by one seeking bloody vengeance. Just as Elektra reaches a climax, a message is brought to Klytemnestra. As she takes in this fresh news, a look of evil triumph engulfs her. She sweeps out as Chrysothemis bursts in with the news: Orest is dead. Two servants hasten to take this "good news" to Aegisth.

Elektra at first refuses to accept Orest's death but tells Chrysothemis that it is then their duty to avenge his death and kill Klytemnestra, using the very ax with which Agamemnon was murdered. Chrysothemis, terrified, rushes out. Elektra, once again alone, is startled by a stranger who has broken in. It is Orest in disguise. Cautious at first, he claims that he and a companion saw Orest killed and have been charged with bearing the information to Queen Klytemnestra. When Elektra tells him that she is of the same blood as Agamemnon and Orest, the siblings recognize each other. She tells him how she has sacrificed her sexuality to the cause of vengeance, and Orest swears vengeance and to do the deed for her. Orest's mysterious, old companion warns the two of them to be prudent and takes the ritual ax from Elektra. Orest finds Klytemnestra in the house and murders her.

The maids comment on the frightening events. Aegisth returns home, to be confronted by Elektra, who now taunts him and pretends to have "changed" in her understanding. He enters the house and is also immediately murdered by Orest. Elektra and Chrysothemis celebrate the murders in frenzied excitement. Elektra is left alone, and the terrible burden caused by the death of her father takes its toll.

First performance: Dresden, Royal Court Theater; January 25, 1909

First performance in the U.S.: New York, Manhattan Opera House; February 1, 1910 (in French)

First San Francisco Opera performance: October 24, 1938, the Company's 16th season

Elektra has been performed in 10 previous seasons. For information about past casts and productions, visit archive.sfopera.com.

Personnel: 16 principals, 45 chorus offstage, 21 supernumeraries; **82 total**

Orchestra: 4 flutes (2 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 1 heckelphone, 2 clarinets in B-flat, 2 clarinets in A, 1 clarinet in E-flat, 1 bass clarinet, 2 basset horns, 3 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 8 horns (4 doubling Wagner tubas), 6 trumpets, 1 bass trumpet, 2 trombones, 1 bass trombone, 1 contrabass trombone, 1 tuba, 2 timpanists (1 doubling percussion), 3 percussion, 2 harps, 1 celeste, 47 strings (8 first violins, 8 second violins, 8 third violins, 10 violas, 7 cellos, 6 basses); **95 total**

Conductor
Eun Sun Kim

Production
Keith Warner

Revival Director
Anja Kühnhold

Set Designer
Boris Kudlička

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Kaspar Glarner

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Hair and Makeup
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SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2026 • 2 PM
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TUESDAY, JUNE 23 • 7:30 PM
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Elektra

Opera in one act by **Richard Strauss**
Text by **Hugo von Hofmannsthal**
Based on the play by **Sophocles**

(Sung in German with English supertitles)

CAST

(in order of vocal appearance)

<i>First maidservant</i>	Gabrielle Beteag
<i>Second maidservant</i>	Sadie Cheslak * †
<i>Third maidservant</i>	Laura Krumm
<i>Fourth maidservant</i>	Mary Hoskins †
<i>Fifth maidservant</i>	Caroline Corrales
<i>The Overseer</i>	Alexandra Loutsion
<i>Elektra</i>	Elena Pankratova *
<i>Chrysothemis</i>	Elza van den Heever
<i>Klytemnestra</i>	Michaela Schuster
<i>Klytemnestra's confidante</i>	Sofia Gotch * †
<i>Klytemnestra's trainbearer</i>	Alexa Frankian * †
<i>A young servant</i>	Chance Jonas-O'Toole *
<i>An old servant</i>	Andrew Thomas Pardini
<i>Orest</i>	Kyle Ketelsen
<i>Tutor of Orest</i>	Jongwon Han
<i>Aegisth</i>	William Burden
<i>Museum guards and visitors</i>	

* San Francisco Opera debut † Current Adler Fellow

PLACE AND TIME: A museum, present day

The performance will last approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes without intermission. Latecomers may not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed.

Patrons who leave during the performance may not be reseated. The use of cameras, cell phones, and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden during the performance. Please turn off and refrain from using all electronic devices.

A photograph of Christine Goerke as Elektra, wearing a long black coat, standing in a museum. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile, her right hand resting on a glass display case. The display case contains several human bones, including a femur, a humerus, and a skull. The background is dark, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting the woman and the bones.

Elektra: A Tortured Mind Triumphant

BY LARRY ROTHE

Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung approached the human mind as a museum. They toured patients' inner galleries, focusing on the permanent collections. What a show the princess Elektra would have offered, a display so disturbing that it gave birth to a psychoanalytical theory. Jung coined the term "Electra complex" in 1913, ten years after the Austrian poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal wrote his play *Elektra*, based on Sophocles' classic drama, and four years after Richard Strauss transformed Hofmannsthal's play into his most musically daring opera. For Hofmannsthal, the character of Elektra (to use the German spelling) must have exercised a powerful appeal, for she embodied the fin-de-siècle hothouse sensuality then dominating literature, theater, and music. As drawn to interiors as were Freud and Jung, Hofmannsthal saw in Elektra the opportunity to depict a tortured mind, to open the doors to her inner museum. Strauss, more pragmatic than the sensitive aesthete who would become his favorite librettist, saw a good story.

In the myth, Elektra's father (King Agamemnon) has sacrificed her sister (Iphigenia) to appease the goddess Artemis, who in return revives the stilled winds and allows Agamemnon's ship to proceed to the battlefields of the Trojan War. During Agamemnon's ten-year absence, Queen Klytaemnestra has taken a lover. The queen, ill-disposed toward her husband to begin with, is outraged by their daughter's death. Agamemnon returns home, to die at the hands of Klytaemnestra and her paramour, Aegisth. In Greek antiquity, every party wronged must exact vengeance. Now, just as her mother avenged the young Iphigenia, Elektra seeks revenge for her father's death. His killers must die. Sophocles captures all this in a story of corrosive sorrow. Hofmannsthal chose not to mention Iphigenia in his version of the legend, thus erasing sympathy for Klytaemnestra. His queen is no grieving mother. She is a self-centered adulteress who wants her husband gone. His murder drives Elektra to the edge of insanity.

When Strauss saw Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* in 1905, he knew it could become an opera, yet he balked at the subject, worried that it too closely resembled his last stage work, *Salome*. That story, drawn from the Bible and thus also set in antiquity, capitalized on flamboyance. The nymphet of the title teases her stepfather, King Herod, with a flood of adolescent sexuality and consummates her

own degenerate fantasies as she fondles the severed head of John the Baptist. For this, Strauss invented a musical opulence that outdid even Berlioz and Wagner. The artistic distance between *Salome* and his first two operas, *Guntram* and *Feuersnot*, corresponds to the space Beethoven put between his Second Symphony and the *Eroica*. *Salome*, with its stunning color, acoustic volume, and dissonances—not to mention the lurid story—earned its composer a reputation as music's current bad boy, modernism's paragon.

Like most writers, Hofmannsthal cultivated a healthy opinion of his own talent and remained vigilant to whatever could advance its recognition. Unwilling to forfeit an opportunity to link his name with the world's most celebrated living opera composer, he went to work on Strauss, emphasizing all that distinguished *Elektra* from *Salome*. He prevailed. Strauss, with his exquisite stage sense, tailored Hofmannsthal's play, cutting it by a third. Hofmannsthal bore Strauss' cuts with magnanimity. Only in subsequent projects would their work become a genuine collaboration, one that lasted two decades, until Hofmannsthal's death in 1929. Their partnership, on a level with Mozart and Da Ponte's, resulted in five more of Strauss' most memorable works for the stage, including *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and *Arabella*.

Some critics condemn *Elektra*'s creators as a pair of toxic males who equate women with hysteria. As recently as a decade ago, Peter Alexander Meyers (the Sorbonne, Princeton) wrote that "What Hofmannsthal and Strauss seek to represent is a mind that is lost, vengeful, and obsessive. It is not by chance that this mind is female." *Elektra*, he asserts, "advances a hostile image of women more generally," for "anti-feminism" plays an "essential role ... in this ridiculous work." Viewed more generously, *Elektra* becomes a feminist parable. A powerful woman knows what she wants and does what she must. If she enlists a man to murder the queen and her lover, it is she who decrees their fate, she who is the avenging force.

That said, *Elektra* spends less time penetrating psyches than aiming for its listener's gut. While Hofmannsthal meant to bring Freud into the act, Strauss' cuts pare the libretto to a straightforward tale of good-over-evil. Strauss removed any moral complication the writer may have retained from Sophocles. As Bryan Gilliam writes in his *Elektra* monograph, Strauss "sacrifice[d] psychological depth and motivational complexity in order to achieve ...

Left to right: *Elektra* was the first of six collaborations between composer Richard Strauss and (pictured here) librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929). / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES; In 1938, soprano Rose Pauly brought her fiery interpretation of *Elektra* to San Francisco Opera, under the baton of fellow Hungarian Fritz Reiner. / LAWRENCE B. MORTON; In the Company's unforgettable 1991 production, Welsh soprano Gwyneth Jones starred in the title role, opposite Helga Dernesch as Klytemnestra. / MARTY SOHL

musical goals.” What remains is painted in primary colors, a tight fusion of action, place, and time. Strauss’ job was to find the musical analogue for this drama.

Elektra’s orchestra is its Greek chorus, commenting on the action. Here, as in *Salome*, Strauss fit sound to subject. To those who ridiculed him for resorting to what his biographer Matthew Boyden has called “the most contrapuntally complex work of music ever written,” scored for an orchestra of 120 instruments that generate a teeth-shaking roar, Strauss had a ready response: “When a mother is slain on the stage, do they expect me to write a violin concerto?”

At *Elektra*’s premiere, in Dresden on January 25, 1909, some listeners believed Strauss had gone too far. He himself wrote that he had “penetrated to the uttermost limits of harmony ... and of the receptivity of modern ears.” But, as Boyden warns, to concentrate on “the ugly and the shocking” is to misread *Elektra*. His point is that *Elektra* is not a modernist manifesto, nor was Strauss’ next opera, *Der Rosenkavalier*, a retreat into orthodoxy. In *Rosenkavalier*, music would match the elegantly upbeat story. Here it matches a tale of obsession and revenge. In both operas, Boyden continues, Strauss was true to the tradition that formed him. And in *Elektra*, he “confirmed both the conventions of his past and the conservatism of his future.” Strauss scholar Michael Kennedy is blunter: “The theory that after *Elektra* Strauss shied away from ‘modernity’ and retreated into a cosy world free from atonality is rubbish.”

In Bryan Gilliam’s concise outline, the opera unfolds in seven sections. In (1), the servants prepare us for Elektra’s entrance. In (2), Elektra raises a plea to Agamemnon. In (3), we meet Elektra’s sister Chrysothemis, a stable presence dropped into a dysfunctional family and thus a destabilizing figure in this somersaulting world. (4) In this central episode, we understand what Elektra faces in Klytaemnestra, whose guilt has undone her remaining maternal instincts. (5) Believing her brother dead, Elektra determines to murder Klytaemnestra and Aegisth herself. She tries to enlist Chrysothemis into her plan. (6) A messenger arrives to confirm Orest’s death, then reveals the death as a ruse. He, the herald, *is* Orest. (7) Orest kills the queen and Aegisth. Elektra dies. Strauss builds this



two-hour span from many pieces—tender love songs, waltzes, tearing dissonance. And every piece fits.

I cannot verify Boyden’s claim that Strauss has threaded sixty-three leitmotifs through his score, each stemming from the figure D-A-F-D, but the contention itself attests to the work’s simultaneous simplicity and complexity. The orchestra announces the first three notes of the D-A-F-D figure in the opening bars. Minutes later the figure recurs in full, and we understand what it means. To the four tones, Elektra utters the four syllables of her dead father’s name: Agamemnon.

Throughout, Strauss varies his four-note cell, creating signatures for his actors and triggers for their actions, all while weaving a dense web of musical markers that engulf us, overtly and subliminally. The Agamemnon theme recurs in its primary form at crucial points, and besides opening *Elektra*, it ends the opera. Among its many variants: the despondent, descending figure associated with Orest’s supposed death; the murmuring low brass that stalks Klytaemnestra (murmuring Agamemnon’s name, or hers?) as she laments her tortured dreams; and, at the opera’s climax, the shift into the major mode as Chrysothemis exults with a cry of “Es ist Orest!” Her words proclaim catharsis, as does the music.

More breathtaking still is what the orchestra offers in the Recognition Scene. As the messenger announcing Orest’s death changes his story and tells Elektra her brother is indeed alive, she begins to grasp this herald’s



identity. “Who are you, then?” she asks. Hofmannsthal envisioned a few moments of silent action after this question. According to his stage direction: “The solemn old servant, followed by three other servants, enters quietly from the courtyard, throws himself before Orest and kisses his feet. The others kiss Orest’s hands and the hem of his garment.” Emerging as if from nowhere comes the opera’s most transparent music, a lilting *pianissimo* tune generated by the Agamemnon motif, rising and falling, a song in itself (which is how Strauss asks the orchestra to play it), mirroring the rebirth of Elektra’s world as she recognizes her brother. The music alone can support the scene and does so even if the stage direction is not followed (often it is not). But to witness a production in which the servants appear while the orchestra sings is to understand how Strauss wed his art to Hofmannsthal’s, creating stage magic.

Strauss does not limit himself to working with the Agamemnon theme. He also unifies and comments on the action by repeating themes literally. In her opening monologue, to five repeated notes—one long and three short staccato, followed by a final rising note—Elektra asserts that Agamemnon will return (“so kommst du wieder”). We hear this figure again as Klytaemnestra explains the power residing in the jewels—*Steine*, literally stones—that hang from her neck. When the “herald” reveals that Orest is alive, a ray of light emerges in the form of a muted fanfare, which reappears in the

celebration after Orest dispenses his mother and her lover. Even Elektra’s final dance is prefigured early, before sixty bars have passed.

Of the score’s many beauties, Chrysothemis owns two that stand above the music’s contours, proclamations that detach themselves from their context and head for the sky: “Kinder will ich haben!” (her hymn to motherhood) and “Es ist Orest!” Chrysothemis wants to leave the past behind, but nothing about her suggests weakness. She is what she seems, a foil to her sister, and a tough one. She stands her ground against Elektra. No stranger to violence, she applauds the murders. And while Elektra appears to dismiss her sister’s yearning for children, she also sees Chrysothemis’ point. Children continue the bloodline. They fulfill the wishes even of the dead: “Glücklich ist, wer Kinder hat,” Elektra sings—“happy are they who have children.” And so she treats her brother with a mother’s sympathies. “Child,” she calls him, having traded her own hope of love for the revenge that fills her and inches toward birth.

Elektra has set this nightmare world right, but that act can have no encore. Her death is no ritual punishment devised for a strong woman. As the final C major chord confirms, it is an apotheosis. This museum’s closing time has come. 🌸

Larry Rothe’s books include *For the Love of Music and Music for a City*, *Music for the World*. Visit larryrothe.com.

Voices from the Pit

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS
DISCUSS RICHARD STRAUSS' *ELEKTRA*

BY JEFFERY S. MCMILLAN



Members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra filling the pit during a rehearsal for *Elektra* in 2017. / Cory Weaver

With the Company premiere of *Elektra* scheduled for late October 1938, San Francisco Opera founder Gaetano Merola knew his guest conductor, Fritz Reiner, would arrive in San Francisco with great expectations. At the very least, the notoriously irascible maestro would require a proper Straussian orchestra. Merola could find the musicians, but seating them presented a problem: the War Memorial Opera House pit was built to accommodate around 70-80 musicians for Verdi and Wagner operas; not the near-100 instrumentalists that Strauss calls for in *Elektra*.

The Opera House was only six years old and likely still had that new-car smell when the *Elektra*-fication of the pit began, including the addition of a new four-foot-wide enclosure under the stage spanning the length of the pit. That space, affectionately called the “Torpedo Room” for its resemblance to the inside of a submarine, continues to be used by the Orchestra today.

Elektra is one of the early paradigm-shifting works in San Francisco Opera’s 103-year history. Along with other large-scaled operas like Strauss’ *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in 1976, Messiaen’s *Saint François d’Assise* in 2002, and Berlioz’s *Les Troyens* in 2015, *Elektra* pushed both artistic and physical boundaries, expanding the Company’s creative capacity. The San Francisco Opera Orchestra’s Principal Harp **Eleanor Kirk**, Acting Principal Percussionist **Patti Niemi**, Principal Bassoonist **Rufus Olivier**, Principal Second Violinist **Jeremy Preston**, and Director of Music Administration **Matthew Piatt** discuss returning to Strauss’ intense and mammoth masterpiece in June 2026.

How are you preparing for *Elektra*?

Niemi: We spend time getting different percussion instruments that we want to use—cymbals, tam tams—and see what we can fit in the pit.

Preston: Strauss tries to get the most technically out of the violins in this opera, more than probably anything else that had come before it. I do a lot of slow practice.

Kirk: I take a look at the larger trajectory of the music and make sure I’m familiar with the synopsis so I know what we’re supporting in the pit. I listen to a variety of recordings with the score and prepare myself for a range of different tempi and make sure I’m familiar with the opera’s sonic world. Opera harp parts often include long tacets, or periods of quiet, so I want to make sure I have a lot of cues in my part. Then if I hear a particular moment in the score, I’m ready to go with my next entrance.

Olivier: I don’t listen to the opera ahead of time. The first time I hear it is at the first rehearsal. I’ve been doing it that way for 50 years, and I still get excited when I hear something new. With something like *Elektra*, I get my part and go through it slowly every day until it becomes part of my body so I’m not even having to think about it. I’ve always been a believer in keeping the instrument in your mouth, because playing, playing, playing is how you get it into your body. By the time you get to rehearsal, whatever the conductor wants you’re able to just do it.

Piatt: I don’t know if it’s specific to this Strauss opera or it’s me getting older, or both, but there’s something about music that is this complicated and saturated with information, that I find myself doing much more slow, deliberate practice. Within Strauss’ polytonality you keep discovering motives, which are sometimes hidden in a complex musical language. It’s kind of like standing up close to an impressionist painting; you really appreciate the detail up close. And then, when I get to playing it at tempo, I will, of course, be leaving things out, but that preparation has been important for internalizing the music and feeling like I have mastered it as much as I can.

What role does your instrument play in the opera?

Kirk: The cool thing about the harp is we can play many different roles within the ensemble. We can accompany a line like a solo clarinet line or concertmaster solo, play in big tutti sections to add to the texture, or play very solositic cadenza-like passages. In *Elektra*, we get to do a little bit of

***“Just the sheer number of people in the pit
is part of the experience.
I don’t want to say ‘over the top,’
but it’s kind of over the top!”—Matthew Piatt***

everything, and switching between roles throughout really keeps us on our toes!

Niemi: The percussion instruments are divided, I would say, into three sections, the first being metal: glockenspiel—the only mallet percussion instrument in *Elektra*—triangle, tambourine, and cymbals. All the metal sounds are mostly thrown in there for sound effect. The second category is wooden, the castanets. Those are usually used in opera for a Spanish effect, like in *Carmen*. In *Elektra*, they are nothing like that; they're chaotic. Then there is an instrument called the rute (pronounced "route-a"), which is like a collection of switches that make a whip sound.

Preston: The work for the strings is divided into three sections, and, actually, sometimes into four. It's eight violins on each part. It's very technically demanding. Strauss will use tremolo, *col legno*, and fast motion to show all the anxiety. He'll use a lot of *ponticello*, which is when you play really close to the bridge creating a glassy sound. He uses extreme ranges, and also chromaticism for this super-slimy feeling, as if to show what it feels like when Elektra is thinking about Klytemnestra. I'm playing the third violin part in this one. That part is more percussive. There are more small gestures, and you rely less on the other violins, so you have to really be there and ready to turn on a dime.

Niemi: I think all Strauss is exciting for percussionists because those operas involve a lot of instruments and a huge orchestra. Percussion is always used to great effect. I'm thinking mostly of *Salome*, *Elektra*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*. And there's just so much drama! In the first two, you have a girl who dances, goes crazy, and dies, all in an hour and 40 minutes. *Elektra* is awesome!

Are there specific moments in the opera that audience members should listen for your instrument?

Olivier: We are like the background music in a movie. Whenever something bad happens, it's usually depicted in the orchestra. In my case, there is a scene where Elektra is talking to her mother about bringing her brother back because he has been sent off. Klytemnestra is saying he is lazy and that he stutters, and the bassoon is playing what they're saying about him.

Kirk: The very first entrance of the harp in the opera, about eleven minutes in, occurs when Elektra sings: "Father

Agamemnon, your day will come from the stars. All time comes crashing down. So will blood from a hundred throats come pouring onto your grave." The harp enters when she sings the word "Stars," or "Sternen" in the original German. It's quite interesting and meaningful because the harp is used there to represent the transition between worlds. Here between the heavens and the earth, and the harp often represents these liminal spaces and transitions in Greek Mythology, as with the underworld and the world of the living in the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.

***Elektra* has the largest ensemble of almost any work in the repertoire. What is it like performing in the pit with 95 instrumentalists?**

Piatt: It's staggering. Just the sheer number of people in the pit is part of the experience. I don't want to say "over the top," but it's kind of over the top [Laughs]. Despite how many people are playing, Strauss still gets these moments of transparency. You're never going to hear or grab onto every leitmotif, but there's something about the speed that keeps it suspenseful.

Kirk: Last fall it was a bit crowded in there for *Parsifal*. I know *Elektra* will be even more crowded, but it's going to be great. It's so special to be a part of a big orchestra and just feel like you're contributing to that sound, and with close quarters you develop a real sense of camaraderie with your colleagues. In a crowded pit, you really feel like the whole orchestra comes together both literally and figuratively. I'm really looking forward to it.

Niemi: The pit is always tight, and, surprisingly, it changes every time as there are always different bodies and their chairs. So even though we've done *Elektra* before, I'm sure we'll get in there at rehearsal and start jockeying for space.

Kirk: Sometimes we have platforms in the pit to elevate us because the harps are usually towards the back. It helps with sightlines and to amplify our sound, but it also provides a little area that cannot be infringed upon as we do need a bit more space in the pit. The harp is a large instrument that weighs 85 lbs. And we use our feet to pedal, so we need space around the base of the harp to move the pedals. And we play, you know, like this [demonstrates with elbows out on either side of the strings] we literally need elbow room.

Olivier: I approach each opera as, okay, let's play this thing. Is that eight clarinets sitting to my right? That's

enough to call the police! But no problem; after you've played [Messiaen's] *Saint Francis of Assisi*, there's nothing more packed than that. We were literally spilling out of the pit! I don't move a lot when I play, so as long as I just have enough room for my elbows it doesn't bother me.

Preston: It gets very tight for *Elektra*, and your movements are more constricted than usual. In some ways, I think that helps us be more attuned to what is going on on the stage. But, it's also extremely loud at times because you have so many instruments blaring away at once. Sometimes you have to wear earplugs, which means you have to use your visual senses a lot more.

Do you have a favorite moment in the score?

Piatt: In the recognition scene after Orest arrives, Elektra has this beautiful A-flat Major section. That's one of my favorite parts, actually it is one of the only quiet, reflective parts in the score.

Niemi: This might sound weird, but my favorite part of the opera is the opening. It's not like we're going to slowly get you into this story of a man who sacrifices his daughter, who is then killed by his wife, so the son then kills the mother. It just starts, and the audience feels all that. And the end is overwhelming. We have two timpani players and another three percussionists, and it just builds to that point with every instrument coming in. I've been here 34 years now, and it is still incredibly exciting, and I have a front row seat to everything. That is the best part of my job.

Preston: I love the ending—it feels like this deranged, almost waltz-like dance. Strauss builds relentlessly, and then suddenly you're swept up into this triple-meter surge. But it's unstable, dissonant—almost unhinged. It feels like an old Viennese waltz colliding with something modern and brutal. You're lifted up, only to be hurled back down again—like Elektra, completely consumed by revenge.

Do the intense emotions of this piece affect you before or after the opera?

Preston: Before we start, you're set to experience psychological warfare for an hour and 40 minutes, and that kind of influences your day. You have to prepare yourself for something very dark. It's not old-world Vienna, charming and beautiful. *Elektra* is the stark opposite of that, and you don't get a lot of relief. But then,



Welsh soprano Gwyneth Jones as Elektra
(with Helga Dernesch as Klytemnestra) in the 1991 production.
MARTY SOHL

when they come, the beautiful melodies kind of make it all worth it, because it's so human and so tender. After operas like this I tend to walk home at night just to physically get it out of me and to maybe spend some time doing mindless things. It's important to take care of yourself.

Niemi: When we did *The Elixir of Love* a couple of years ago with Pene Pati [November 2024], I felt emotionally involved because it was so stunning. It's just a fun opera, but the audience and the singers were so invested that it got to me every time. *Elektra* is torturous, dramatic, violent, but as an orchestra musician I don't take any of that on. It's more the thrill of performing it.

A special question for Mr. Olivier who has been with the Orchestra since 1977 and played five productions of *Elektra*. Is there one *Elektra* memory that stands out?

Oliver: Yes! With Dame Gwyneth Jones in 1991. We're rehearsing, and the Orchestra is on afterburners. We're cranking it, man. And Gwyneth is up there singing Elektra, and she is really cranking it, too, you know? The ceiling is shaking, and the brass guys were in heaven. The conductor stops us and asks Gwyneth, "Is the orchestra too loud in that spot?" And she said, "What orchestra?" [laughs] You could hear her out on Polk Street! 🌟

Public Relations Director and program editor Jeffery S. McMillan is a writer on opera and jazz.

Special thanks to Music Assistant Nina Pitts and Editorial Consultant Jeanette Yu for help conducting the interviews for this article.

Artist Profiles

* San Francisco Opera Debut † Role Debut ‡ Current Adler Fellow ◆ Adler Fellowship Graduate † Merola Opera Program Graduate



EUN SUN KIM

(Seoul, South Korea)

Conductor

San Francisco Opera

Highlights: *Parsifal*; *Rigoletto*; *Un Ballo in Maschera*; *Tristan und*

Isolde; *Idomeneo*; *Il Trovatore*; *Lohengrin*; *Dialogues of the Carmelites*; *La Traviata*; *Fidelio*; *The Magic Flute*; *Tosca*; *Madama Butterfly*; John Adams' *Antony and Cleopatra*; *Eun Sun Kim: A Journey into Lohengrin* film

Recent and Upcoming: *Simon Boccanegra* (San Francisco Opera); *Manon* (San Francisco); *Strauss in Concert* (San Francisco); *Das Rheingold* (San Francisco); *Carmen* (Madrid's Teatro Real, Zurich Opera); *Madama Butterfly* (Munich's Bavarian State Opera); *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Berlin State Opera); *La Bohème* (Milan's Teatro alla Scala, Vienna State Opera); *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Paris Opera); Verdi Requiem (Dutch National Opera); *Hänsel und Gretel* (Munich); concerts with Dresden Philharmonic, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid, Berlin Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre National de France, Philharmonia Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, National Brass Ensemble
Instagram: @eskconductor



ELENA

PANKRATOVA*

Soprano

(Graz, Austria)

Elektra

Recent and

Upcoming: Dyer's

Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Berlin State Opera, Vienna State Opera, Amsterdam's Dutch National Opera, Baden-Baden); title role of *Turandot* (Vienna, Berlin State Opera, Metropolitan Opera); title role of *Elektra* (Deutsche Oper Berlin, Metz, Tokyo); Wagner Gala (Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra); title role of *Tosca* (Trieste's Castello di San Giusto); *Isolde* in *Tristan und Isolde* (Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu); *Kundry* in *Parsifal* (Bayreuth, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Brussels' La Monnaie, Leipzig, Barcelona, Houston Grand Opera); *Ortrud* in *Lohengrin* (Bayreuth, Salzburg); Schönberg's *Gurre-Lieder* (Tokyo)
Professor at University of Music and Performing Arts Graz
Instagram: @elena_pankratova_soprano



MICHAELA

SCHUSTER

Mezzo-Soprano

(Vienna, Austria)

Klytemnestra

San Francisco Opera

Highlights: Mme. de

Cröissy in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*
Recent and Upcoming: Herodias in *Salome* (Valencia's Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, Zurich Opera); Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Berlin State Opera, Amsterdam's Dutch National Opera); Klytemnestra in *Elektra* (Metropolitan Opera)
Professor of Voice at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna



ELZA VAN DEN

HEEVER◆†

Soprano

(St. Jean de Védas, France)

Chrysothemis

San Francisco Opera

Highlights: Leonore in *Fidelio*; Elettra in *Idomeneo*; Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*; Mary Custis Lee in Philip Glass' *Appomattox*; First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*; Lady-in-waiting in *Macbeth*

Recent and Upcoming: Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* (Paris Opera, Milan's Teatro alla Scala); Elsa in *Lohengrin* (Berlin State Opera, Bayreuth); title role of *Turandot* (Frankfurt Opera); Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera); title role of *Salome* (Metropolitan Opera, Paris); Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* (Metropolitan Opera); Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Metropolitan Opera); Chrysothemis in *Elektra* (Baden-Baden, Berlin Philharmonic); Julia in Gaspare Spontini's *La Vestale* (Paris)
San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program: 2005, 2006, 2007
Merola Opera Program: 2003, 2004



KYLE KETELSEN

Bass-Baritone

(Sun Prairie, Wisconsin)

Orest

San Francisco Opera

Highlights: Escamillo in *Carmen*

Recent and Upcoming: Title role of *Don Giovanni* (Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera); Méphistophélès in *Faust* (Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Canadian Opera Company); *Der Freischütz* (Munich, Potsdam); Jochanaan in *Salome* (Hamburg State Opera); Orest in *Elektra* (Hamburg); Christmas concert (Madison Symphony Orchestra); Leporello in *Don Giovanni* (Salzburg, Munich, Dallas, Lyon); Adahm

ARTIST PROFILES CONTINUED

in Rudi Stephan's *Die Ersten Menschen* (Amsterdam's Dutch National Opera); Howard in Missy Mazzoli's *The Listeners* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Escamillo in *Carmen* (Metropolitan Opera); Richard in Kevin Puts' *The Hours* (Metropolitan Opera); Mozart Requiem (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Seville's Teatro de la Maestranza, LA Opera, Metropolitan Opera); Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* (Chicago Symphony Orchestra); Count Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula* (Zurich); King of Scotland in *Ariodante* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Méphistophélès in *La Damnation de Faust* (Les Siècles in Bonn); Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* (Amsterdam)
Winner of The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (1998)

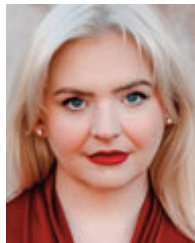


WILLIAM BURDEN ♪+
Tenor
(Miami, Florida)
Aegisth
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: George Bailey in Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *It's a Wonderful Life*; Peter in Mark Adamo's *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*; Dan Hill in Christopher Theofanidis' *Heart of a Soldier*
Recent and Upcoming: Kevin Puts' *The Hours* (Metropolitan Opera); Brett Dean's *Hamlet* (Metropolitan Opera); Nick in *La Fanciulla del West* (Metropolitan Opera)
Faculty member at the Mannes School of Music and the Juilliard School Merola Opera Program: 1991



JONGWON HAN ♪
Bass-Baritone
(Seoul, South Korea)
Tutor of Orest
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*; Tom in *Un Ballo in Maschera*; Voice of the Oracle in *Idomeneo*; Colline in

Bohème Out of the Box; Noble in *Lohengrin*; Speaker in *The Magic Flute*; Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto*; Second Knight of the Grail in *Parsifal*
Recent and Upcoming: Bonze in *Madama Butterfly* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Palm Beach Opera); concerts (Grant Park Music Festival); Schaunard in *La Bohème* (Atlanta Opera); Handel's *Messiah* (Dayton Opera); Penderecki's *Credo* (Oregon Bach Festival); Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Oregon Bach Festival)
San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program: 2023, 2024, 2025
Instagram: @jongwon_han



CAROLINE CORRALES ♪+
Soprano
(St. Louis, Missouri)
Fifth maidservant
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*; Kitty Hart in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*; Sixth Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*; Moira in Poul Ruders and Paul Bentley's *The Handmaid's Tale*; Mimi in *Bohème Out of the Box*
Recent and Upcoming: Ma Zegner in Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up*; Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*; Mimi in *La Bohème* (Opera Naples); *Carmina Burana* (Metropolitan Chorale); *Holiday Pops! Concert Series* (Boston Pops Symphony)
San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program: 2024, 2025
Merola Opera Program: 2023
Instagram: @carolinecorrales_soprano



ALEXANDRA LOUSSION
Soprano
(Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)
The Overseer
San Francisco
Opera Highlights: The Overseer in *Elektra*
Recent and Upcoming: Gertrude in *Hänsel und Gretel* (Houston Grand Opera); Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* (Teatro Nuovo, Opera Idaho); Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (Virginia Opera); Gerhilde in *Die Walküre* (Dallas Symphony Orchestra); Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* (Virginia); Mother Abbess in *The Sound of Music* (Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Glimmerglass Festival); The Overseer in *Elektra* (Dallas Opera, Washington National Opera); Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* (Virginia, Opera Santa Barbara); Leonora in *Il Trovatore* (Pittsburgh Opera, Central City Opera); Leonore in *Fidelio* (Austin Opera); title role of *Salome* (Bard); Kayla in Kamala Sankaram's *Taking Up Serpents* (Chicago Opera Theater); recital (Pittsburgh Festival Opera); title role of *Elektra* (Minnesota Opera); title role of *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Pittsburgh Opera); title role of *Tosca* (Palm Beach Opera); title role of *Turandot* (New Orleans Opera, Tulsa Opera)
Guest lecturer at Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California
Instagram: @alooshsoprano



GABRIELLE BETEAG ♪+
Mezzo-Soprano
(Lilburn, Georgia)
First maidservant
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: Offred's Mother in Poul Ruders and Paul Bentley's *The Handmaid's Tale*; Voice from Above in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*; Image of Frida Kahlo in Gabriela Lena Frank and Nilo

ARTIST PROFILES CONTINUED

Cruz's *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*; Teacher in Mason Bates and Mark Campbell's *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*; Iras in John Adams' *Antony and Cleopatra*; Sister Gertrude in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*

Recent and Upcoming: Schwertleite in *Die Walküre* (LA Philharmonic); Mahler's Third Symphony (Santa Rosa Symphony); Jake Heggie's *Good Morning, Beauty* (Cabrillo Festival); Mahler's Second Symphony (Santa Rosa, National Orchestral Institute); Gertrude Stein in Tom Cipullo's *After Life* (Music of Remembrance); Mère Marie in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Wolf Trap Opera); Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (San Francisco Ballet); Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Wolf Trap); Anna in Kurt Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* (Wolf Trap); Errollyn Wallen's *Roundel*; Mercédès in *Carmen* (Atlanta Opera); Woman with Hat in John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* (Chautauqua Opera)

Winner of The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (2020)

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program: 2022, 2023

Merola Opera Program: 2021

Instagram: @mezzogabrielle



SADIE CHESLAK [†]₊
Mezzo-Soprano
(Duluth, Minnesota)
Second maidservant
Recent and Upcoming: The Princess in *Suor*

Angelica scenes (Merola Opera Program); Orphée in Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice* excerpts (Wolf Trap Opera); workshopped Ellen Reid's *prism*, Ilya Demutsky's *Black Square*, and the title role of Sky Macklay's *The Surrogate*

Winner of The Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition (2025)

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program: 2026

Merola Opera Program: 2025



LAURA KRUMM [†]₊
Mezzo-Soprano
(San Francisco, California)
Third maidservant
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: Idamante

in *Idomeneo*; Eliza in Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels' *Omar*; Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*; Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana*; Kitchen Boy in *Rusalka*; Javotte in Massenet's *Manon*; Siegrune in *Die Walküre*; Countess Ceprano and Page in *Rigoletto*; Maid in Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*; Martha in Nolan Gasser's *The Secret Garden*; Second Esquire and Third Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*

Recent and Upcoming: Javotte in *Manon* (San Francisco Opera, Metropolitan Opera); Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold* (San Francisco); Stephano in *Roméo et Juliette* (LA Opera); Prince in *Cendrillon* (Cedar Rapids Opera); Mozart Requiem (Orchestra Iowa, Santa Rosa Symphony); Jane Seymour in *Anna Bolena* (Musica in Hong Kong); Siegrune in Act III of *Die Walküre* (Los Angeles Philharmonic at Hollywood Bowl); Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* (Mendocino Music Festival, Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera); Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Reno Philharmonic, Auburn Symphony); *Fedora* (Metropolitan Opera)

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program: 2012, 2013

Merola Opera Program: 2011



MARY HOSKINS [†]₊
Soprano
(Saratoga Springs, Utah)
Fourth maidservant
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: Cretan

Woman in *Idomeneo*; Paralegal in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*

Recent and Upcoming: Title role in the final scene of *Ariadne auf Naxos*

(Schwabacher Summer Concert); excerpts from *Fidelio* and Strauss' *Die Ägyptische Helena* (Merola Grand Finale concert); Fiordiligi in scenes from *Così fan tutte*; Mimi in *La Bohème*; Mary in Gregory Spears' *Fellow Travelers*, and First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* (Wolf Trap Opera); arias from *Don Giovanni* and *Pagliacci* (Dolora Zajick's Institute for Young Dramatic Voices)

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program: 2025, 2026

Merola Opera Program: 2024



ALEXA FRANKIAN [†]₊
Soprano
(Oakville, Ontario, Canada)
Klytemnestra's trainbearer
San Francisco Opera

Highlights: Mimi in *Bohème Out of the Box*

Recent and Upcoming: Mimi in *La Bohème* (Merola Opera Program); title role of *Iolanta* (Merola); excerpts as the title role from *Suor Angelica*, Alice Ford from *Falstaff*, and Fidelia from Puccini's *Edgar* (Merola); Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts); Suzel in Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz* (AVA); Despina in *Così fan tutte* (AVA); Henech Kon's *Bas Sheve*; Alice Ho's *The Monkiest King*

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program: 2026

Merola Opera Program: 2024, 2025



SOFIA GOTCH [†]₊
Soprano
(Oakland, California)
Klytemnestra's confidante
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: Musetta

in *Bohème Out of the Box*

Recent and Upcoming: Alice in *Le Comte Ory* (Merola Opera Program); Almirena in *Rinaldo* (Manhattan School of Music); Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette*

ARTIST PROFILES CONTINUED

(MSM); La Fée in *Cendrillon* (MSM); Titania, the Fairy Queen, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (MSM); Sharp Ears, the Vixen, in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (MSM); soprano soloist in Mahler's Fourth Symphony (MSM Symphony Orchestra); high soprano soloist in Matthew Aucoin and Peter Sellars' *Music for New Bodies* (American Modern Opera Company, Aspen Music Festival & School) San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program: 2026

Merola Opera Program: 2025



ANDREW THOMAS PARDINI

Baritone
(Modesto, California)

An old servant
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: Flora's

Servant in *La Traviata*; Imperial Commissioner in *Madama Butterfly*; Reporter in Mason Bates and Mark Campbell's *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*; Customhouse Sergeant in *La Bohème*

Recent and Upcoming: Benoît and Alcindoro in *La Bohème* (Mendocino Music Festival); Baron in *Cendrillon* (Opera Modesto); bass soloist in Verdi Requiem (Berkeley Community Chorus & Orchestra); baritone soloist in Brahms Requiem (San Francisco Choral Society); Corporal in *La Fille du Régiment* (Festival Napa Valley); title role of *The Marriage of Figaro* (Pocket Opera); baritone soloist in Duruflé Requiem and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* (Cantare Con Vivo); bass soloist in Mozart Requiem (Marin Symphony, Lakeside Symphony and Chorus); bass soloist in Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* (Marin Symphony); Papageno in *The Magic Flute* (Livermore Valley Opera Outreach); Sciarone in *Tosca* (Livermore Valley Opera); baritone soloist in 40th Anniversary Gala (Modesto) Member of San Francisco Opera Regular Chorus



CHANCE JONAS-O'TOOLE* J)+

Tenor
(Dallas, Texas)

A young servant
Recent and Upcoming: Don

Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (San Francisco Opera); David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Deutsche Oper Berlin); Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Berlin); Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* (Berlin); *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Berlin); Gastone in *La Traviata* (Berlin); First Jew in *Salome* (Berlin); *Anna Bolena* (Berlin); John/Angel 3 in George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* (Berlin); Chekalinsky in *The Queen of Spades* (Berlin); John Little in Daniel Bernard Roumain's *We Shall Not Be Moved* (Pittsburgh Opera); Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* (Merola Opera Program) Merola Opera Program: 2022, 2023
@chance_jonasotoole_tenor



ANJA KÜHNHOLD

(Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany)

Revival Director
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: *Elektra*
Recent and

Upcoming: Rameau's *Platée* (Theater Hagen); *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges/L'Heure Espagnole* (Pfalztheater Kaiserlautern); *Carmen* (Heidelberg); *La Traviata* (Theatre Chemnitz, Wasserschloss Glatt); *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Wuppertal); *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Pfalztheater Kaiserlautern); Purcell, Handel, and Monteverdi's *Schaf* (Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe); Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera* (Karlsruhe, Dutch National Opera Academy); *Gianni Schicchi* (Karlsruhe); Prologue to *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Karlsruhe); Leonard Evers' *Gold!* (Karlsruhe); Haydn's *La Fedeltà Premiata* (DNOA)

Opera Department Director at Theater Kiel
Website: anjakuehnhold.com

Creative Team



KEITH WARNER
(London, UK)

Production
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: *Elektra*
Recent and Upcoming: Ethel

Smyth's *The Wreckers* (Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe); *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Vienna State Opera); *Tosca* (Santa Fe Opera); Orff's *Die Kluge* (Frankfurt Opera); Weill's *Der Zar Lässt Sich Photographieren* (Frankfurt); *La Cenerentola* (Frankfurt); Adès' *The Tempest* (London's National Opera Studio); *Falstaff* (Frankfurt); *Hänsel und Gretel* (Frankfurt); Christian Jost's *Egmont* (Vienna's Theater an der Wien); *Giulio Cesare* (Theater an der Wien); Verdi's *Otello* (London's Royal Ballet and Opera); *Vanessa* (Glyndebourne Festival)



BORIS KUDLIČKA

(Bratislava, Slovakia)
Set Designer
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: *Elektra*;
Madama Butterfly
Recent and

Upcoming: Set designer of *Otello* (London's Royal Ballet and Opera); *Die Zauberflöte* (Tokyo's Bunka Kaikan); Toshirō Mayuzumi's *Kinkakuji* (Strasbourg's Rhin Opera, Tokyo's Bunka Kaikan); *Madama Butterfly* (Minamoto: Tokyo's Niki Kai Opera); *La Traviata*; *Halka*; *Salome*; *Boris Godunov*; Karol Szymanowski's *King Roger*; *Iolanta*; *Eugene Onegin*; Paul Hindemith's *Cardillac*; *The Fiery Angel*; *Turandot* Director of *Carmina Burana* (Warsaw's Wielki)
General Director of Polish National Opera

ARTIST PROFILES CONTINUED



KASPAR GLARNER
(Paris, France)
Costume Designer
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: *Elektra*
Recent and
Upcoming: *Falstaff*

(Frankfurt Opera); *Boris Godunov* (Frankfurt); Verdi's *Otello* (London's Royal Ballet and Opera); *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Vienna State Opera, Frankfurt); Handel's *Alcina* (Frankfurt); Verdi's *I Masnadieri* (Munich's Bavarian State Opera); Kurtág's *Endgame* (Berlin State Opera); *Ring* cycle (Tiroler Festspiele)



JOHN BISHOP
Lighting Designer
(Sebergham, UK)
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: *Elektra*
Recent and
Upcoming: *Siegfried*

(Beijing); *Tristan und Isolde* (Genoa); Strauss' *Die Liebe der Danae* (Genoa); Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Genoa); Petrou's *Sarrasine* (Göttingen); *Simon Boccanegra* (Opera Philadelphia); *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Vienna State Opera); *Boris Godunov* (Frankfurt); *Hänsel und Gretel* (Frankfurt, Glasgow); Orff's *Die Kluge* (Frankfurt); Weill's *Der Zar Lässt Sich Photographieren* (Frankfurt); *Jenůfa* (Oslo); *Elektra* (Karlsruhe); *Pagliacci* (Seoul); *Tannhäuser* (Tokyo); *Carmen* (Turin); Tippett's *New Year* (Birmingham); *La Bohème* (Grange Park Opera); *Falstaff* (Grange Park Opera); Anthony Bolton's *The Life and Death of Alexander Litvinenko* (Grange Park Opera); *King Lear* (Grange Festival); Sondheim's *Passion* (Montepulciano)
Website: johnbishop.me.uk



BARTEK MACIAS
(Kraków, Poland)
Video Designer
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: *Elektra*;
Madama Butterfly
Recent and

Upcoming: *Falstaff* (Warsaw); *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Lyon, Polish National Opera); *Peter Grimes* (Polish National Opera, Israeli Opera); *La Forza del Destino* (Warsaw, Metropolitan Opera); *Boris Godunov* (Polish National Opera, Tokyo's New National Theatre); Karol Szymanowski's *King Roger* (Polish National Opera, Stockholm); *Die Tote Stadt* (Polish National Opera, Brussels' La Monnaie); Paul Hindemith's *Cardillac* (Polish National Opera, Cologne); *The Fiery Angel* (Aix-en-Provence, Polish National Opera); *The Magic Flute* (Tokyo); *Madama Butterfly* (Dresden, Copenhagen); Toshirō Mayuzumi's *Kinkakuji* (Tokyo, Strasbourg); *Parsifal* (Tokyo's Bunka Kaikan, Strasbourg); *Gogo No Eiko* (Tokyo's Nissay Theatre); Mikael Karlsson's *Melancholia* (Stockholm)

Co-founder of the post-production studio Lunapark
Initiator and creative director of the artistic project Yes Eye Do! focusing on the promotion of contemporary art



JOHN KEENE
(Lancaster, Pennsylvania)
Chorus Director
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: *Don Giovanni*; Bright

Sheng and David Henry Hwang's *Dream of the Red Chamber*; *Eun Sun Kim Conducts Verdi*; John Adams' *Antony and Cleopatra*; *Eugene Onegin*; *Dialogues of the Carmelites*; *La Traviata*; *Orpheus and Eurydice*; *Madama Butterfly*; *Die Frau ohne Schatten*; Gabriela Lena Frank and Nilo Cruz's

El último sueño de Frida y Diego; *100th Anniversary Concert*; *Il Trovatore*; Mason Bates and Mark Campbell's *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*; *Lohengrin*; Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels' *Omar*; *The Elixir of Love*; *The Magic Flute*; Kaija Saariaho's *Innocence*; *Un Ballo in Maschera*; Poul Ruders and Paul Bentley's *The Handmaid's Tale*; *Tristan und Isolde*; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; *Carmen*; *La Bohème*; *Idomeneo*; *Rigoletto*; Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*; *Parsifal*; Huang Ruo and David Henry Hwang's *The Monkey King*; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*
Recent and Upcoming: *Simon Boccanegra*; Thea Musgrave's *Mary, Queen of Scots*; *Manon*; *Le Nozze di Figaro*; *Tosca*

Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition and San Francisco Conservatory of Music Voice Concerto Competition judge

Instagram: @keenejohn



DAVE MAIER
(El Cerrito, California)
Fight Director
San Francisco Opera
Highlights: Jake

Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*; *Il Trovatore*;

John Adams' *Antony and Cleopatra*; *Carmen*; *Tosca*; the *Ring* cycle; *Pagliacci*; *Rigoletto*; *Romeo and Juliet*; *Billy Budd*
Recent and Upcoming: *Pagliacci*

(Opera San José); *As You Like It* (Marin Shakespeare Company); *The Cherry Orchard* (Marin Theatre); *M. Butterfly* (SF Playhouse); *Flex* (SF Playhouse); *Hamlet* (Oakland Theater Project)



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA & SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PRESENT

OPERA BALL

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2026



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All dates, prices, programs, artists, and productions subject to change. Tickets subject to availability. Illustration by Brian Stauffer.



TIMESTAMP 2026-04-11 2:35 PM

San Francisco Opera's 2026 performances of *Bohème Out of the Box* got off to a spectacular and unexpected start. After a month of glorious weather, the opening weekend for the shipping container-stage production at San Francisco's Crane Cove Park on April 11 and 12 was threatened by an incoming storm. Determined to keep the performances on track, the Opera's Special Programming & Experiences Producer Ellen Presley worked with partners at the Port of San Francisco and Pier 70 to secure space inside Building 12 in less than 48 hours! Thank you Pier 70 for opening your doors to the Box and nearly 900 hardy music lovers who braved the rains for live opera. The crowd was welcomed by General Director Matthew Shilcock and San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie (including the Mayor's cheer, "Let's go, San Francisco!") and experienced a heartbreakingly beautiful performance. Let the rains rain. The show will go on!

PHOTO BY RENEFF-OLSON PRODUCTIONS

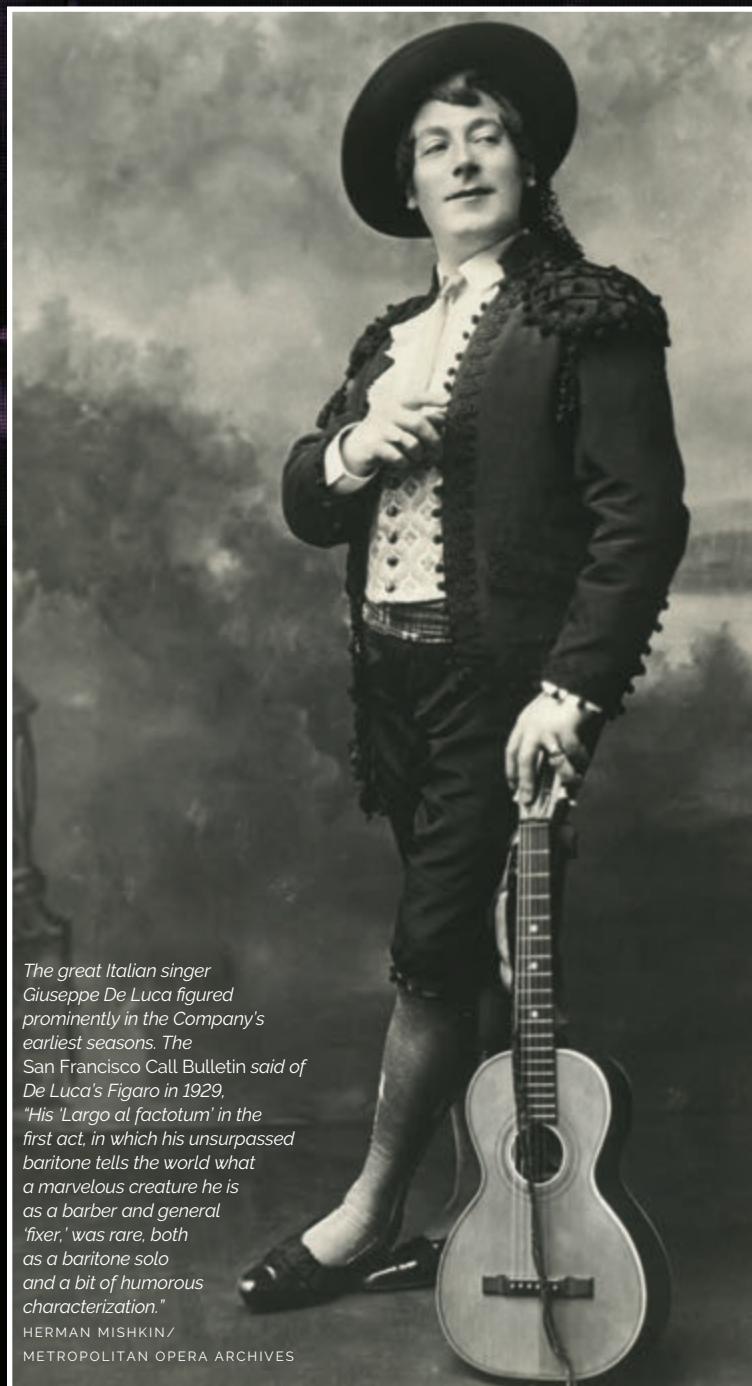




ADBELLY

The Figaros of San Francisco

Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Strauss' *Elektra* offer two operatic extremes—delightful comedy and intense tragedy—but they each have an unforgettable title character. Take a look at a few San Francisco Opera artists whose vivid portrayals as Figaro and Elektra brought these figures to life in new ways across the Company's 103-year history.

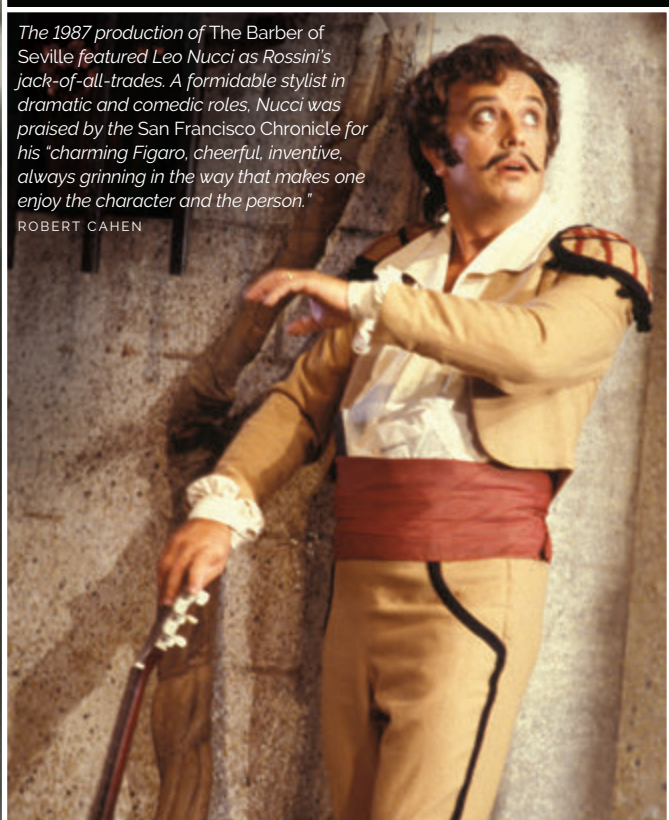


The great Italian singer Giuseppe De Luca figured prominently in the Company's earliest seasons. The San Francisco Call Bulletin said of De Luca's Figaro in 1929, "His 'Largo al factotum' in the first act, in which his unsurpassed baritone tells the world what a marvelous creature he is as a barber and general 'fixer,' was rare, both as a baritone solo and a bit of humorous characterization."

HERMAN MISHKIN/
METROPOLITAN OPERA ARCHIVES



Lucas Meachem is among San Francisco Opera's most charismatic Figaros of recent years. The American baritone starred in Emilio Sagi's production at the War Memorial Opera House in 2013 and 2015, and in 2021 portrayed the barber in Matthew Ozawa's outdoor staging at the Marin Center drive-in. / STEFAN COHEN



*The 1987 production of *The Barber of Seville* featured Leo Nucci as Rossini's jack-of-all-trades. A formidable stylist in dramatic and comedic roles, Nucci was praised by the San Francisco Chronicle for his "charming Figaro, cheerful, inventive, always grinning in the way that makes one enjoy the character and the person."*

ROBERT CAHEN

The Elektras of San Francisco



Hungarian soprano Rose Pauly's concert appearances as Elektra at Carnegie Hall in 1937 had a wild intensity that terrified audiences and created a furor for Strauss' opera. The following year, Pauly dominated American stages from New York to San Francisco in the role, helping to establish Elektra in the country's operatic repertoire. / METROPOLITAN OPERA ARCHIVES



Dame Gwyneth Jones was a San Francisco Opera favorite from her 1969 debut in Beethoven's Fidelio until her final appearances in Verdi's Macbeth which opened the 1994 season. Her riveting Elektra in 1991 remains the stuff of legend—ask a few longtime San Francisco patrons if they were there. / ROBERT CAHEN



The commanding voice and stage presence of London-born Amy Shuard impressed San Francisco Opera audiences as the title roles in Elektra, Wagner's Die Walküre, and Puccini's Turandot. Highlights of her thrilling 1966 Elektra can be heard on the Company's website at sfopera.com/streaming-the-first-century.

CAROLYN MASON JONES



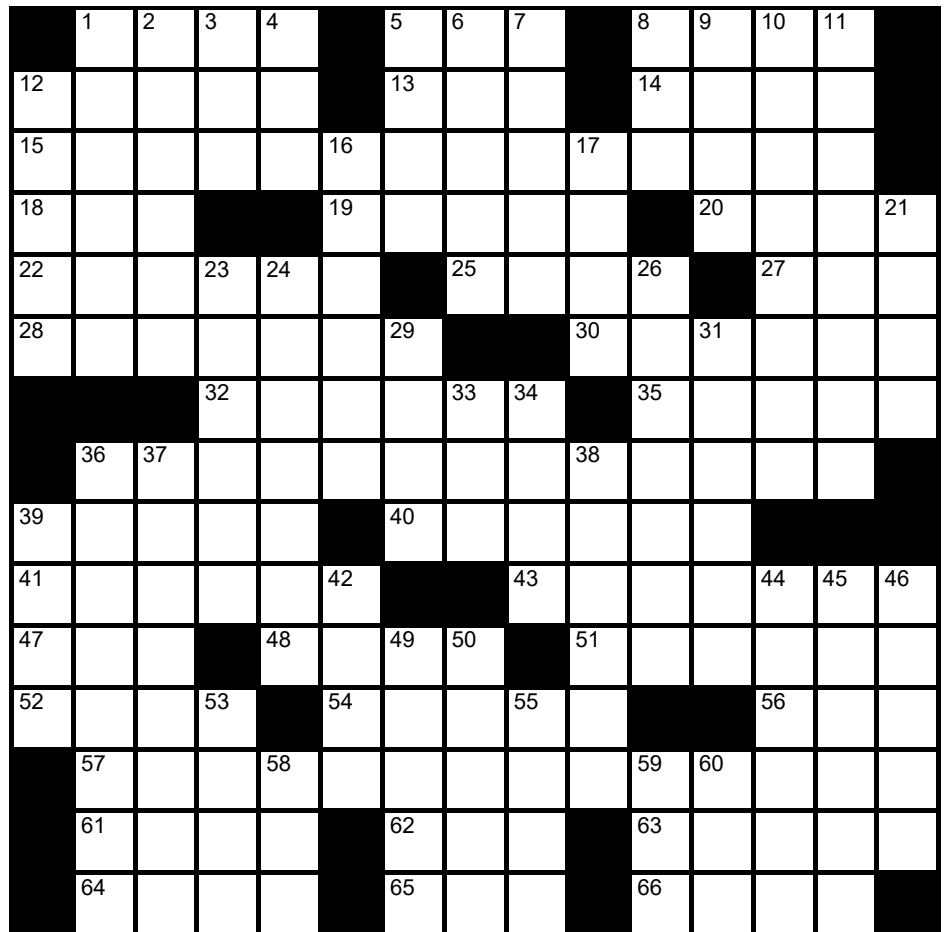
Like Rose Pauly in the late 1930s, Christine Goerke triumphed as Elektra at Carnegie Hall before bringing her interpretation to the War Memorial Opera House. In 2017, the American soprano starred in the Company premiere of Keith Warner's staging and Elektra-fied audiences. / CORY WEAVER

ACROSS

- 1. In the raw
- 5. Used to be
- 8. Attired
- 12. Trite
- 13. Calligrapher's need
- 14. Purcell heroine
- 15. Putin's country inspires male child?
(ROSSINI + STRAUSS)
- 18. "Oh, what's the ___?"
- 19. Argentina's neighbor
- 20. Music, dance, and so on
- 22. Spot for a metaphorical tempest
- 25. Extended family
- 27. Tinder or Waze, e.g.
- 28. Devoured
- 30. Band or stamp material
- 32. Made a loud, harsh sound
- 35. *In C* composer Terry
- 36. Dissident Saudis' arduous journey?
(BARBER + ELEKTRA)
- 39. *The Most Happy* ___
- 40. Roam in search of plunder
- 41. Most peculiar
- 43. Serving dishes for soup
- 47. E.T.'s ride
- 48. Get better
- 51. Hilly San Francisco neighborhood,
familiarily
- 52. Seldom seen
- 54. To no ___
- 56. Transcript fig.
- 57. Paleolithic guys get a glimpse of
Tomlin? (SEVILLE + MYCENAE)
- 61. The first place?
- 62. Went speedily
- 63. Flags
- 64. Chowderhead
- 65. Command to a dog
- 66. Old flames

DOWN

- 1. Queasiness
- 2. Remove from office



- 3. ___ *Rheingold*
- 4. Actor Wallach
- 5. What you might make over birthday
candles
- 6. Caper
- 7. Proficiency
- 8. Storage medium for operatic music
- 9. *Mona* ___
- 10. Like a puppy, generally
- 11. Hider's admonition
- 12. Cruel or savage person
- 16. Genuine
- 17. Back end
- 21. Agile
- 23. Little rock
- 24. Restrained, as a dog
- 26. Encourage the development of
- 29. Baby buggy, in Birmingham
- 31. Audubon Society member, probably
- 33. Period of history
- 34. Feathered missile
- 36. Visibly embarrassed or angry
- 37. Fabled locale of untold wealth
- 38. Gaudy trinket
- 39. Number of operas in the *Ring* Cycle
- 42. The Valkyries, for example
- 44. It's under the hood
- 45. Port city near Pompeii
- 46. Kills
- 49. Declares
- 50. Hawaiian island
- 53. Daredevil Knievel
- 55. "___ It Romantic?"
- 58. Med. specialty
- 59. Mom on the farm
- 60. Common destination from SFO

Joshua Kosman is the former music critic for the San Francisco Chronicle and co-constructor of the cryptic crossword "Out of Left Field."

See the solution on page 57



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OPERA



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THE RING

JUNE 2028

*2026-27 Subscribers and Donors of \$150 or more. Illustration by Brian Stauffer

San Francisco Opera News



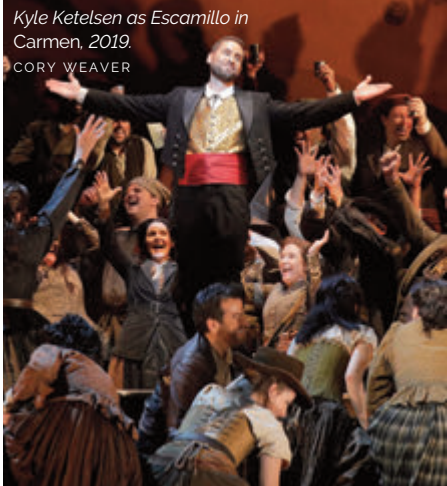
The 2025 Merolani after last summer's Merola Grand Finale Concert in the Opera House. / Kristen Loken

Witness Tomorrow's Stars

Each summer, Merola Opera Program—an independent nonprofit that works in partnership with San Francisco Opera—welcomes a new international cohort of emerging performers for an intensive, tuition-free training program. The 2026 class of Merolani consists of 22 singers, 5 pianists, and 1 stage director whose talents will be on display at the annual Merola Summer Festival beginning June 25.

The 2026 Festival kicks off at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music with *L'Anima Napoletana*, a recital showcasing art songs and popular music from Naples, the birthplace of namesake Gaetano Merola, who also founded San Francisco Opera. *La Tragédie de Carmen*, theater and film director Peter Brook's condensation of Bizet's popular opera, will be presented at Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall on July 9 and 11. Two weeks later, Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, which blends lighthearted comedy with mythological tragedy, is on stage July 30 and August 1. Merola's 2026 Summer Festival concludes August 15 at the War Memorial Opera House with the Grand Finale Concert, featuring the Merolani in arias, ensembles, and scenes from across the repertoire.

Tickets to the Merola Summer Festival are on sale now. Merola Opera Program members enjoy exclusive, behind-the-scenes access to master classes, rehearsals, receptions, and the signature "Day at Merola" experience which offer a rare glimpse into the making of tomorrow's stars. For tickets and membership information, visit merola.org.

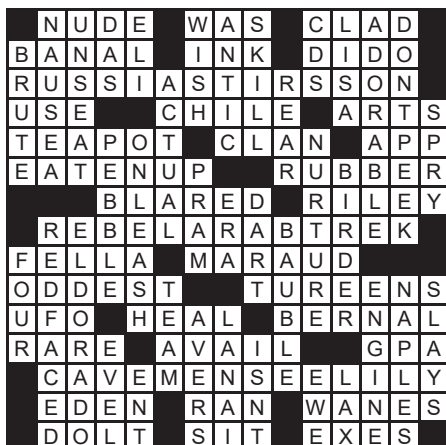


Kyle Ketelsen as Escamillo in Carmen, 2019.
CORY WEAVER

Kyle Ketelsen and Carrie-Ann Matheson in Recital

Kyle Ketelsen returns to San Francisco Opera from June 7–27 as Orest in *Elektra*. The acclaimed American bass-baritone, who has appeared with the Company in past seasons as Escamillo in *Carmen*, will also be presented on June 16 in recital with San Francisco Opera Center and Merola Opera Program Artistic Director Carrie-Ann Matheson at the Barbro Osher Recital Hall. For this concluding event of the 2026 Schwabacher Recital Series presented in collaboration with Merola Opera Program, Ketelsen and Matheson will be joined by six 2026 Merolini for an evening of selections by Duparc, Ravel, Verdi, and Puccini. For tickets, visit sfopera.com/srs or call (415) 864-3330.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE SOLUTION FROM PAGE 54



WSNC The Wagner Society of Northern California

Join us to explore the life and work of Richard Wagner through insights from historians and scholars, and performances by world-renowned musicians, singers, conductors, and directors.

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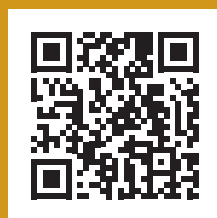
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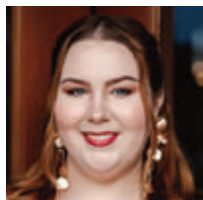
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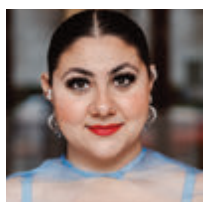
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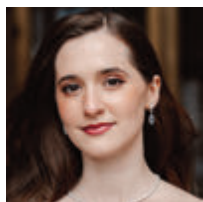
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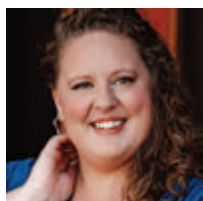
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- Invitation for eight to a champagne reception after your performance of *Das Rheingold*
- Private backstage tour for up to eight guests
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General Manager, San Francisco Opera Center

Grace Owens, *Opera Center Coordinator*

Gerrod Pagenkopf, *Opera Center Scheduler*

CHORUS & DANCE

Noelle Romelfanger, *Chorus & Dance Manager*

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Jeffery McMillan, *Public Relations Director*

Teresa Concepcion, *Communications Manager*

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Nina Novasic, *Development Finance Manager*

Patrick Anderson,

Executive Associate to the Chief Philanthropy Officer

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Roya Clune, *Director of Annual Giving*

Samantha Burgess, *Annual Giving Manager*

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Director of Individual & Leadership Giving

Jen Amato,

Associate Director of Individual & Leadership Giving

Alondra Orellana,

Associate Director of Legacy & Individual Giving

Tom Mulder,

Associate Director of Individual & Corporate Giving

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Katherine Wood, *Senior Individual Giving Officer*

Maude Engström, *Legacy Giving Manager*

Justine Sedky, *Individual Giving Officer*

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Lila Butler, *Associate Director of Special Events*

Johann Joson, *Manager of Donor Stewardship*

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Director of Engagement and Connectivity

Christabel Nunoo,

Education Development Manager

Heather Kelly-Laws, *DEC Project Manager*

Cole Thomason-Redus, *DEC Content Curator*

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Kip Cranna, *Dramaturg Emeritus*

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Sadye Sobel,

Executive Assistant to the Music Director

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Armando Benutto, **Felix Bishop**, **Stuart Bousel**,

Jan Brown, **Danica Burt**, **Wendy Chang**,

Frank Chow, **Kathy Dere**, **Martin Dias**,

Felix Dina, **Dave Doering**, **Jonathan Drogin**,

Caesar Evangelista, **Bill Flanagan**, **Christine Ford**,

Josh Garcia, **Jorge Gonzalez-Rodriguez**, **Elisa Jeon**,

Kate Juliana, **Elaine Kawasaki**, **Kathleen Keeler**,

Helen Kim, **Ryszard Koprowski**, **Chris Largent**,

Vicki Larkowich, **Sharon Lee**, **Leland Leong**,

Sadie Li, **Michael Mak**, **Sam Mesinger**,

Nick Mitchell, **John Morris**, **Dale Nedelco**,

Beth Norris, **Jennifer Norris**, **Justin Owens**,

Jan Padover, **Julie Peck**, **Christine Plowright**,

Bill Repp, **Jack Sale**, **Robyn Sandberg**,

Allen Sawyer, **Kelly Smith**, **Kumi Stanfield**,

Melissa Stern, **Theresa Sun**, **Janet Tom**, **Claire**

Tremblay, **Marta Troyano**, **Richard Wagner**,

Steve Weiss, **Tom Wong**, **May Yasui**

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Hui Ming Wu, *Show Maid*

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Senior Marketing Manager, Digital & Acquisition
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Marketing Manager, Email and Digital
Sophia Nguyen,
Marketing Manager, Brand & Loyalty
Emma Saperstein,
Senior Marketing Coordinator, Web & Engagement
Tamara Haddad,
Marketing Coordinator, Digital Content
Sajja Maki-Waller,
Marketing Coordinator, Brand & Loyalty
Bill Murray,
Marketing Manager, Web and E-Commerce
Den Legaspi, *Art Director*
Katy Zolfaghari, *Creative Project Manager*

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Rebecca Page,
*Medallion Society Concierge Manager,
Assistant Box Office Manager*
Jennifer Pollack,
Group Sales Manager, Assistant Treasurer
Charles McGraw, Christopher Mark,
Assistant Treasurer
Emily Tilles,
Subscriptions Manager, Assistant Treasurer
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Subscriber Representative*
Dale Whitmill, *Subscriber Representative*
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Kyle Minor, Yma Munoz, Julia Williams,
Patron Services Personnel

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Tracy Davis, *Orchestra Manager*
Nina Pitts, *Orchestra Administrator*
Carrie Weick, *Orchestra Librarian*
Zofia Sabee, *Orchestra Librarian*

PEOPLE

Timmy Yuen, *Associate Director, Human Resources*
Savannah Criswell, *Human Resources Analyst*

PRODUCTION

*Senior Production Staff Member

PRODUCTION ADMINISTRATION

Ryan O'Steen, *Director of Production Operations & Media**
Celine Strouts, *Associate Production Director**
Ellen Presley,
Producer, Special Programming & Experiences
Paul Dana, *Support Services Coordinator*
Sylvia Jiang, *Production Finance Assistant*
Áine Donnelly, *Production Finance Assistant*
Sophie Gunther,
Coordinator, Special Programming & Experiences

AUDIO

Doug Mitchell,
Head of Audio/Video
Eric Bumgarner,
Assistant Head of Audio/Video
Rick Jacobsohn,
Resident Sound Designer

CARPENTRY

David Hatch, *Head of Carpentry*
Greg Harsha, *Assistant Head of Carpentry*
Christopher Davis, *Wilsey Center Head*

COSTUME DEPARTMENT

Daniele McCartan, *Costume Director**
Jai Alltizer, *Costume Shop Manager*
Charlotte Brockman, *Production Accountant*
Galen Till, *Senior Production Supervisor*

ELECTRICS

Leon Parsons, *Head of Electrics*
Michael Anderson, *Assistant Head of Electrics*
Russell E. Adamson III,
Lighting and Projection Systems Administrator

FIGHT DIRECTION

Dave Maier, *Fight Director*

LIGHTING

Justin A. Partier, *Lighting Director**
Brian Elston, Elijah Kleinberg,
Assistant Lighting Designers
Taylor Olson, *Lighting Intern*

MEDIA

Jodi Gage, *Creative Producer, Media*

PROPERTIES

Frederick Wielandt, *Head of Properties*
Tara Pellack, *Assistant Head of Properties*

SCENE SHOP

John Del Bono, *Scene Shop Foreperson*
Emily Yoder, *Scenic Artist In Charge*

STAGING STAFF

Darin Burnett,
*Production Stage Manager**
Collette Berg, Darin Burnett, Jennifer Harber,
Stage Managers
E. Reed Fisher, Dan Wallace Miller,
Morgan Robinson,
Assistant Stage Directors
Jonathan S. Campbell,
Megan Coutts, Rosie Burns Pavlik, Anna Reetz,
Assistant Stage Managers
Colm Seery, *Dance Master*

TECHNICAL DIRECTION

Erik Walstad, *Technical and Safety Director**
Lawren Gregory, *Assistant Technical Director*

WARDROBE

Tony Gorzycki, *Head of Wardrobe*
Cynthia Fusco, Carol Horaitis,
Robert Horek, Brendan Cooper,
Wardrobe Assistants

WIG, HAIR, & MAKEUP

Jeanna Parham,
Department Head of Wigs, Hair, and Makeup
Christina Martin,
*Assistant Department Head of
Wigs, Hair, and Makeup*

REHEARSAL

Trey Costerisan,
Rehearsal Department Director
Jordan W. Thomas,
Rehearsal Department Scheduling Manager
Jayne Diliberto,
Rehearsal Department Coordinator: Personnel

Dr. Myron Marx, *Company Medical Adviser*

Seyfarth Shaw LLP, *Counsel*

Armanino LLP, *Independent Public Accountants*

UCSF doctors:

Dr. George Rutherford
Dr. Robert Harrison
Dr. Sanziana Roman

Asero Insurance Services, *Insurance Brokers*

Cory Weaver, *Official Photographer*

Yamaha is the Official Piano of San Francisco Opera

Pianos supplied by Piedmont Piano

Backstage Personnel

COSTUME SHOP

Jai Alltizer (25), *Costume Shop Manager*
Galen Till (21),

Senior Production Supervisor

Manuel Gutierrez (26),

Production Coordinator

Robyn Marsh, *Costume Supervisor*

Sally Thomas (25), *Head Tailor*

Amy Ashton-Keller (31), *Head Draper*

Nika Cassaro, Emma Lehman (10),

Santiago Suanes (15), Drapers

Paula Wheeler (33), *Senior Milliner*

Karen Lewis, *Dyer/Painter*

Jersey McDermott (26),

Senior Craftsperson/Shoe Specialist

Julia Colvard, Taylor Newell,

Kaitlyn Patrick, Kristen Tracy (17),

Assistant Cutters

Niko Suits, *First Hand*

Victoria Mortimer, *Costume Assistant*

Teddy Rose Baker, *Shopper*

COSTUME TECHNICIANS

Miriam Acosta

Hoa Fong (26)

Sophia Gallegos

Jaya Grace Goheen

Ashley Grambow

Kathy Griffith

Gillian Haratani (13)

Aki Hasegawa

Meg Horan

Arianna B. Jones

Sara Morimoto (12)

Mikael Nohai

Sarah Ellen Wilson

Robert Whitehurst

WARDROBE DEPARTMENT

CORE CREW

Nicolas Chacon

Linda Edwards (27)

Edward Fonseca (14)

Lorraine Lewis (13)

Phil Perry (28)

Leona Schrader-Dee

Don Smith (29)

Scott Stewart (25)

Kirsten Tucker (22)

Amber Vo

DRESSERS

Ash Cable

Kathleen Crowley

Alan Herro

Claudia Holaday (46)

Patrick Sanchez (15)

WIG, HAIR, AND MAKEUP DEPARTMENT

SENIOR WIG ARTISTS

Erin Hennessy (13)

Maur Sela (10)

WIG ARTISTS

Calli Carvajal

Lindsay Saier

SHOW CALL FOREPERSONS

Lindsay Saier

Tim Santry (35)

PRINCIPAL WIG, HAIR, AND MAKEUP ARTISTS

Calli Carvajal

Sarah Coy

Karalynne Fiebig (19)

Denise Gutierrez (43)

Toby Mayer (35)

Gloria Mueller

Naki Mugambi

Leilani Norman

Y. Sharon Peng (11)

Lisa Patnoe (35)

Lindsay Saier

Tim Santry (35)

Sophia Smith (12)

SHOW CALL WIG, HAIR, AND MAKEUP ARTISTS

Vanessa Blanchard Lee

Kristen Campbell

Calli Carvajal

Sarah Coy

Luna Finn

Marisela Garcia

Denise Gutierrez (43)

Erin Hennessy (13)

Chri Holmgren-Greene

Raegina Joyner

Amber Loudermilk

Christina Martin (13)

Toby Mayer (35)

Robert Mrazik (20)

Gloria Mueller

Naki Mugambi

Leilani Norman

Lisa Patnoe (35)

Y. Sharon Peng (11)

Jordan Plath

Vanessa Root

Lindsay Saier

Maur Sela (10)

Sophia Smith (12)

Kimberly Virgen

SCENE SHOP

Dennis Forry

Christian Martinez

Dylan Maxson

Victor Sanchez (28)

SCENIC ART DEPARTMENT

Lauren Abrams

CARPENTRY DEPARTMENT

Jesse Austin

Lucy Briggs

Gabriel Castellani (15),

Automation Key

Michael Chapman (13)

Jack Davis

Paul Delatorre (26),

Night Crew Foreperson

Jacob Elliott

Hunter Erbach, *Inventory Key*

Tony Garcia

Karla Hargrave

Geoffrey R. Heron (19)

Geoffrey W. Heron (31)

Philip Heron (23),

Automation and Rigging Foreperson

Rahgen Hill

Ed Joe (21)

Nick Kukielka

Wyatt Martinez

Michael Martino

Anna McGriff

Alex Meyer, *Automation Layout*

Ben Miller, *Assistant Flyperson*

Harry Niedzwetzki (33)

Jesse Nugent

John O'Donnell (37), *Key Flyperson*

Enrique Pronio

Michael Ramirez, *Assistant Key*

James Ryan

Michael Ryan

Eila Saarni, *Key*

Raymond Sais

Gregory Shaff (37), *Key*

Harper Shipley, *Assistant Key*

Cyrus Sindicich

Derek Snediker

Sean Walden (14),

Warehouse Foreperson

Randy Walsh (23), *Key*

Sammy Wong

PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Scott J. Barringer (25), *Key*

Amy Boussard

Christy Carter

Jay Cazel

James Eldredge (21), *Shop Mechanic*

Oris Fry

Tim Heaney

Jane Henderson

Gabby Hernandez-McKig

Patricia Hewett (18), *Assistant Key*

Myron Seth Isaacs (25), *Key*

Mark Kotschnig (23), *Key*

John Matlock, *Assistant Key*

Victor McCarthy

Baylie Olson

Beth Ozarow (29), *Out of House Key*

Sarah Shores (18), *Shop Mechanic*

Mae Toone

Morgan Womble-Dahl

ELECTRICS DEPARTMENT

Eugene Ahn (12), *Gel Room*

Samir Arora, *Key Projectionist*

John Boatwright (38),

House Head Electrician

Ariel Bott, *Assistant Key Stage Left*

Danielle Colburn

Henry Cotter

Andrew Custer

Erik Docktor (18), *Projection Programmer*

Amy Domjan, *Layout Electrician*

Will Grunig (23)

Griffin Harwood

Robert Haycock, *Key Stage Right*

Matt Heron, *Pyro Technician*

Bernard Honigman (26),

Key Light Board Operator

Karen Jine

Brendan Kierans (12),

Electric Shop Foreperson

Sophie Landau (11)

Maria Mendoza (37), *Projection Coordinator*

Lloyd Murphy, *Key Projectionist*

Jonathan Philpott-Kenny

Glenn Quilici, *Assistant Key Stage Right*

Kevin Quintero

Matthew Reynolds

William Rodriguez

Kirt Siders, *Data Administrator*

Andrew Sproule (26), *Key Stage Left*

Jax Steager,

Assistant Key Light Board Operator

AUDIO DEPARTMENT

Emad Dajani, *Key*

Patrick Dowd

Christine Dumke

Bryan Olson, *Key*

Ziggy Tomcich (23)

MEDIA DEPARTMENT

Claude Bauschinger, *Video Editor*

Doug Hunt

Mitchell Kell

Brian Shimetz

Uwe Willenbacher (17), *Audio Editor*

STUDIO TEACHERS

Donnell Barnes, Carolyn Crimley,

Rhona Gordon, Lua Hadar, Martha Harris,

Stacy Heniser, Jamie Keller,

Karen Kindig, Laila Vatanka

WRANGLERS

Alexandra Armstead

Kate Juliana,

Jonah Malamud, Haley May

Employees who have served the Company for more than 10 years are listed with their years of service.



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

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2025-26 Artists

Chorus

PRINCIPAL ARTISTS

Raymond Aceto
Georgiana Adams+∅
Javier Arrey
Justin Austin*
Jamie Barton
Tanja Ariane Baumgartner*
Gabrielle Beteag+∅
Andrew Bidlack
Aleksy Bogdanov+
Eugene Brancoveanu+∅
J'Nai Bridges
William Lee Bryan
William Burden+
Charmaine Butcher*■
Cheryl Cain
Patrick Carfizzi
Danielle Cheiken*
Kelly Chase■
Peixin Chen*+
Sadie Cheslak*+
Shuqi Cong■
Catherine Cook+∅
Logan Cook*
Caroline Corrales+∅
Chris Costanz*
Zachary Cowan*
Brandon DiPaola
Amartuvshin Enkhbat
Alexa Frankian*+
Anders Froehlich
John Fulton
Carla Gallardo
Rod Gilfry
Kevin Gino
Renato Girolami
Sofia Gotch*+
Susan Graham+
Edward Graves+∅
Thomas Hall
Jongwon Han∅
Yuntong Han
Stella Hannock

Harlan Hays
Connor Herrmann
Joshua Hopkins
Jackson Horton*
Mary Hoskins+
Christopher Jackson
Michael Jankosky
Silvie Jensen
Chance Jonas-O'Toole*+
Brandon Jovanovich
Joo Won Kang+∅
Maria Kataeva#
Wilford Kelly
Kyle Ketelsen
Samuel Kidd+∅
Konu Kim
Thomas Kinch+
Bojan Knezevic+∅
Anna Kosiarek*
Laura Krumm+∅
Eric Levintow
Joseph Lim
Alexandra Loutsion
Daniela Mack+∅
Sophia Maekawa
James McCarthy+∅
Jana McIntyre*+
Ryan McKinny
Liest McPherrin
Niko Min
Amber Monroe+
David Adam Moore
Melody Moore+∅
Sally Mouzon
Brian Mulligan
Christopher Nachtrab
Nikolas Nackley
Sarah Nadreau
Antonio Nagore
Gabriel Natal-Báez*+
William O'Neill
Christopher Oglesby+∅
Andrew Thomas Pardini
Elena Pankratova*

Jusung Gabriel Park*
Yulan Piao
Chester Pidduck
Laurel Porter
Nikola Printz+∅
Ben Reisinger
Brittany Renee
Kindra Scharich
Michaela Schuster
Levy Sekgapane*
Chad Shelton
Philip Skinner+∅
Olivia Smith+∅
Reginald Smith, Jr.
Jonathan Smucker
David Soar
Whitney Steele
Falk Struckmann
Elisa Sunshine+∅
Jack Swanson*
Jesslyn Thomas
Ryan Torres*
Andrew Truett
Elza van den Heever+∅
Marcos Vedovetto■
Sebastian Villalobos
Kang Wang*
Samuel White+∅
Hongni Wu
Wei Wu
WooYoung Yoon+
Kwangchul Youn
Yongzhao Yu*
Adela Zaharia
Olivier Zerouali+
Huiwang Zhang*■
Mei Gui Zhang+

CONDUCTORS

Eun Sun Kim
Carolyn Kuan*
Benjamin Manis
Robert Mollicone+∅
Patrick Summers+

PRODUCTION

Keith Warner

STAGE DIRECTORS
Katrina Bachus*
Jose Maria Condemini+∅
E. Reed Fisher
Leonard Foglia
Anja Kühnhold
Matthew Ozawa
Diane Paulus*
Emilio Sagi
Roy Rallo
Basil Twist*

CHOREOGRAPHERS

Rena Butler
Nuria Castejón
Jamie Guan*
Colm Seery
Ann Yee*
Huiwang Zhang*

KEY:

American Debut
* San Francisco Opera Debut
† Current Adler Fellow
+ Merola Opera Program Graduate
∅ Adler Fellowship Graduate
■ Solo Dancer
Cover Artist

John Keene, Chorus Director
Fabrizio Corona, Associate Chorus Master

REGULAR CHORUS

Buffy Baggott
Kathleen Bayler
C. Michael Belle
William Lee Bryan
Cheryl Cain
Janet Campbell
Danielle Cheiken
Alan Cochran
Sara Colburn
Edith Dowd
Angela Eden
Anders Froehlich
John Fulton
Kevin Gino
Stella Hannock
Harlan Hays
Katherine Ivie
Christopher Jackson
Michael Jankosky
Silvie Jensen
Wilford Kelly
Crystal Kim
Bojan Knezevic
Nadima Kombajyan
Josephine YoonGeong Lee
Eric Levintow
Elisabeth Rom Lucio
Liest McPherrin
Sally Mouzon
Nikolas Nackley
Sarah Nadreau
Antonio Nagore
Erin Neff
William O'Neill
Andrew Thomas Pardini∅
Alexander John Perkins
Philip Pickens/
William Pickersgill
Chester Pidduck
Laurel Cameron Porter
Jonathan Smucker
Whitney Steele
Jesslyn Thomas
Andrew Truett∅
Jacque Eileen Wilson

EXTRA CHORUS

Morgan Balfour
Daniel Brakefield
Erich Buchholz
Daniel Cilli
Clare Demer
Phoebe Dinga
Spencer Dodd
Mélissa Dufort
Stephanie Feigenbaum
Margaret Genovese
Lena Goldstein
Luis González
Spencer Greene
Matt Hidalgo
Nina Jones
David Kekuewa
Michael Kuo
Marielle Leiboff
Yitao Lin
Benjamin Liupaogo
Joachim Luis
Michael Orlinsky
Carly Passer
Leandra Ramm
Mary Rauh
Dewey Reikofski
Cliff Romig
Grace Sawyko
B Schaubhut
Chung Wai Soong
Lee Steward
Carmello Tringali
Troy Turriate
Nicolas Vasquez-Gerst
Nicholas Volkert

∅ Chorus member on leave of absence

∅ Solo Role

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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



Orchestra

Eun Sun Kim, *Music Director*

FIRST VIOLIN

Kay Stern, *Concertmaster*
Maya Cohon, *Associate Concertmaster*Σ
Heidi Wilcox, *Assistant Concertmaster*
Jennifer Cho
Dawn Harms
Mariya Borozina
Naoko Nakajima
Dian Zhang
Leonid Igudesman
Jennifer Hsieh
Asuka Annie Yano
Ani Bukujian†

SECOND VIOLIN

Jeremy Preston, *Principal*
Martha Simonds, *Associate Principal*
Leslie Ludena, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Ka-Yeon Lee
Aya Kiyonaga
Craig Reiss
Heeguen Song†
Emma Votapek†

VIOLA

Carla Maria Rodrigues, *Principal*
Joy Fellows, *Associate Principal*Σ
Stephen Goist, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Natalia Vershilova
Lindan Burns
Emily Liu†
Elizabeth Prior†

CELLO

Sunny Yang, *Principal*
Thalia Moore, *Associate Principal*Σ
Peter Myers, *Assistant Principal*
Nora Pirquet
Emil Miland
Jung-Hsuan Ko
Ruth Lane

BASS

Joseph Lescher, *Principal*
Jonathan Lancelle, *Associate Principal*
William Wasson, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Shinji Eshima
Sean O'Hara†

FLUTE

Stephanie McNab, *Acting Principal*
Susan KangΣ†
Katrina Walter†

PICCOLO

Stephanie McNab
Susan Kang†

OBOE

Mingjia Liu, *Principal*
Gabriel Young, *Associate Principal*
Benjamin Brogadir

ENGLISH HORN

Benjamin Brogadir

CLARINET

José González Granero, *Principal*
Joshua Choi
Junghwan Lee

BASS CLARINET

Junghwan Lee

BASSOON

Rufus Olivier, *Principal*
Daniel MacNeillΣ
Shawn Jones†

CONTRABASSOON

Shawn Jones†

FRENCH HORN

Kevin Rivard, *Principal*
Phillip Palmore
Brian McCarty, *Associate Principal*
Anthony Delivanis
Logan BryckΣ

TRUMPET

Adam Luftman, *Principal*
Scott Macomber
John PearsonΣ

TROMBONE

Michael Cox, *Acting Principal*
Samuel Wamhoff†
David Ridge

BASS TROMBONE

David Ridge, *Principal*

TUBA/CIMBASSO

Zachariah Spellman, *Principal*

TIMPANI

John Burgardt, *Principal*

PERCUSSION

Patricia Niemi, *Acting Principal*
Victor Avdienko†

HARP

Eleanor Kirk, *Principal*

LIBRARIAN

Carrie Weick

√ Leave of absence

Σ Principal for one or more

Summer season operas

† Season Substitute

Corps Dancers

Colm Seery, *Dance Master*

Brett Conway↔
Jamielyn Duggan↔
Alexandra FitzGibbon
Blanche Hampton↔■
Felipe Leon
Coral Martin↔

Micah Moch
Christopher Nachtrab↔
Chiharu Shibata↔■
Marcos Vedovetto↔

↔ Tenured

√ Tenured Dancer on Leave of Absence

□ Resident Corps

■ Solo Role

Supernumeraries

Elektra

Sue August
Knox Burnett
Raulston Burnett
Stacey Chien
Thomas Colletta
Paige D'Encarnacao
Misha Derkavski
Karsten Guthridge
Eric Johnson
Aiden Lin-Setchkov
Alan LoFaso

Leland Lujan
Holly MacCormick
Mumtoz Ochilova
Michael Pinell
Skyden Ramm
Elisabeth Smith
Adam Thier
Kimberly Thompson
Barbara Tolbert
Ross Uchimura

San Francisco Opera Orchestra



Kay Stern
Concertmaster



Maya Cohon
Associate
Concertmaster



Heidi Wilcox
Assistant
Concertmaster



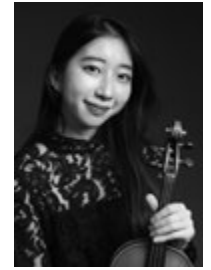
Jennifer Cho
First Violin



Dawn Harms
First Violin



Mariya Borozina
First Violin



Naoko Nakajima
First Violin



Dian Zhang
First Violin



Leonid Igudesman
First Violin



Jennifer Hsieh
First Violin



Asuka Annie Yano
First Violin



Jeremy Preston
Principal
Second Violin



Martha Simonds
Associate Principal
Second Violin



Leslie Ludena
Acting Assistant
Principal, Second Violin



Ka-Yeon Lee
Second Violin



Aya Kiyonaga
Second Violin



Craig Reiss
Second Violin



Carla María Rodrigues
Principal
Viola



Joy Fellows
Associate Principal
Viola



Stephen Goist
Acting Assistant
Principal Viola



Natalia Vershilova
Viola



Lindan Burns
Viola



Emily Liu
Viola†



Elizabeth Prior
Viola†



Thalia Moore
Associate Principal
Cello



Peter Myers
Assistant Principal
Cello



Nora Pirquet
Acting Assistant
Principal Cello



Emil Miland
Cello



Jung-Hsuan Ko
Cello



Ruth Lane
Cello



Joseph Lescher
Principal
Bass



Jonathan Lancell
Associate Principal
Bass



Shinji Eshima
Bass



William Wasson
Bass



Stephanie McNab
Acting Principal
Flute & Piccolo

† Season Substitute

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ORCHESTRA CONTINUED



Susan Kang
Flute↑



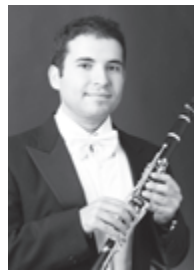
Mingjia Liu
Principal
Oboe



Gabriel Young
Associate Principal
Oboe



Benjamin Brogadir
English Horn



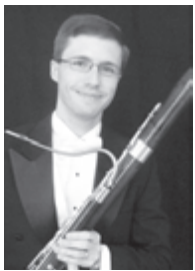
José González Granero
Principal Clarinet



Junghwan Lee
Bass Clarinet



Rufus Olivier
Principal
Bassoon



Daniel MacNeill
Bassoon



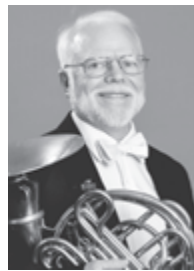
Shawn Jones
Bassoon/
Contrabassoon↑



Kevin Rivard
Principal
Horn



Phillip Palmore
Horn



Brian McCarty
Associate Principal
Horn



Logan Bryck
Utility Horn



Adam Luftman
Principal
Trumpet



Scott Macomber
Trumpet



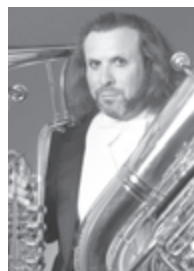
John Pearson
Trumpet



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David Ridge
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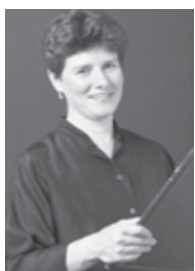
Patricia Niemi
Acting Principal
Percussion



Victor Avdienko
Percussion↑



Tracy Davis
Orchestra Manager



Carrie Weick
Librarian

Not pictured:

- Ani Bukujian (First Violin)↑*
- Maki Ishii Sowash (Second Violin)*
- Heeguen Song (Second Violin)↑*
- Emma Votapek (Second Violin)↑*
- Sunny Yang (Principal Cello)*
- Sean O'Hara (Bass)↑*
- Katrina Walter (Flute)↑*
- Anthony Delivanis (Horn)*
- Samuel Wamhoff (Trombone)↑*
- Eleanor Kirk (Principal Harp)*

↑ Season Substitute

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Soprano



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Soprano



Sara Colburn
Soprano



Angela Eden
Soprano



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Soprano



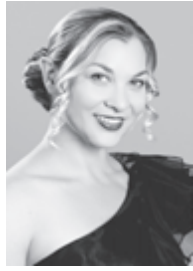
Crystal Kim
Soprano



Nadima Kombajyan
Soprano



**Josephine
YoonGeong Lee**
Soprano



Liesl McPherrin
Soprano



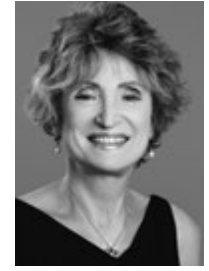
Elisabeth Rom Lucio
Soprano



Jesslyn Thomas
Soprano



Buffy Baggott
Mezzo-Soprano



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Mezzo-Soprano



Edith Dowd
Mezzo-Soprano



Stella Hannock
Mezzo-Soprano



Silvie Jensen
Mezzo-Soprano



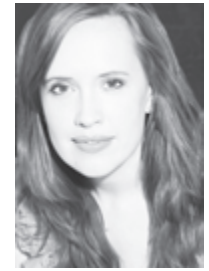
Sally Mouzon
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Porter**
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Jacque Wilson
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Michael Jankosky
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leave of absence



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Baritone



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Nikolas Nackley
Baritone



Andrew Thomas Pardini
Baritone



Wilford Kelly
Bass



Bojan Knežević
Bass



William O'Neill
Bass



William Pickersgill
Bass

San Francisco Opera Corps Dancers



Jamielyn Duggan



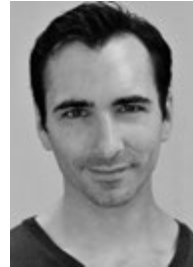
Brett Conway



Blanche Hampton



Coral Martin



Christopher Nachtrab

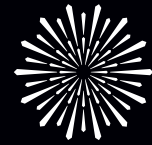


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Marcos Vedovetto

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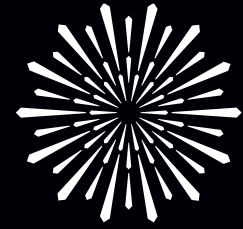
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Six Reflections at 10 Years

BY GENERAL DIRECTOR MATTHEW SHILVOCK

This season marks my tenth as your general director and my twentieth with the Company. I still pinch myself that I am part of this storied institution, and I am deeply grateful to you, the San Francisco Opera family, for allowing us to make the last ten years such incredible expressions of creativity.

One of the things that I love about SFO is longevity. After twenty years, I still feel like a newbie when I consider the decades of connection that certain members of this community have. For example, Rufus Olivier, our principal bassoon, has been with us for 46 years. Or the 540 households who have been subscribing for over forty years.

So, it is with humility and admiration for all those who have been here much longer than I, that I wanted to share six reflections in this anniversary year. Six aspects that, to me, define this great Company.

1. We are a company with an extraordinary legacy and it's vital we honor that legacy. In our past is both the foundation of the Company we have become and guideposts as to where we might head. Since 1923 we have been a bastion of excellence, innovation, and connection to community. We are only the third opera company in America to turn 100 and it is critical that our history be a part of our present.

2. We are a company defined by our people. San Francisco Opera is made up of those who make the art and those who receive it. Everything we do comes out of the mysterious alchemy of all these people coming together in just the right way at the right time, with transcendent art emerging.

3. Artistic freedom is a beautiful and powerful part of our DNA. The board and community give us freedom to create works that help us make sense of the world. 25 years ago, Phyllis Wattis gave us the freedom to commission *Dead Man Walking*. Today, the board and our donors give us freedom to program works like *Innocence*, *The Monkey King* and, next year, *The Galloping Cure*. We must never take



CODY PICKENS

artistic freedom for granted. It is a defining feature of opera in the Bay Area.

4. We excel in the epic. There is something about our stage, our theatre, our community, that reverberates in stories of monumental proportion and impact. The *Ring* has been a part of our identity since 1935 and its return in 2028 marks the first staged *Ring* in America since the pandemic. We are the only

American company to have staged works like Messiaen's *St. François d'Assise* or Ligeti's *Le Grande Macabre*. We are a company where a new *Parsifal* last fall was a profound expression of the company's creative talents. We are blessed with epic capabilities, and we must keep producing work of epic impact.

5. We are in the most exciting, entrepreneurial place in the world: the global technology capital, the home of AI, and the home of some of the most important digital media companies to exist. We are making connections that will allow us to supercharge as a company and, in making these connections, we are learning that we must be authentic. When we bring the very best of ourselves into this entrepreneurial energy extraordinary things can, and will, result.

6. Our core currency is "trust" and that must be cherished and nurtured. Every node of how we produce and share art requires trust: to have performances that allow us to glimpse the sublime, we must be a place of great vulnerability—company and audience members. We need people to take just the right amount of risk and feel supported in the process. This trust is built up over years and, if it is in our art-making, great things can happen.

It is an absolute privilege to be part of a company where these six factors come into such beautiful relief season after season. We are part of something very special here at San Francisco Opera, and I'm profoundly grateful for the chance to be carrying all this into the future with you all as we write the next chapter of this most incredible of companies. 🌟

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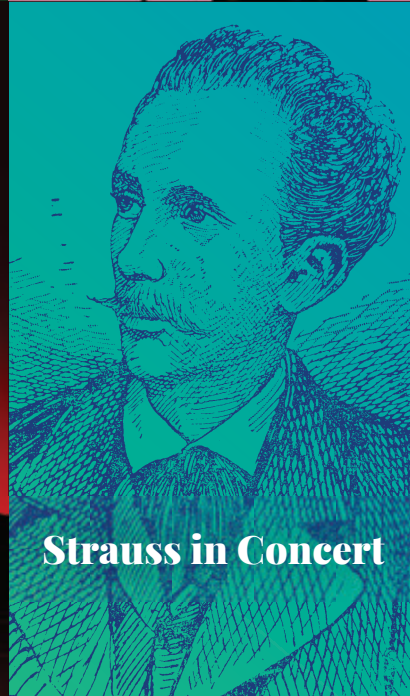
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