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# The Elixir of Love

BY GAETANO DONIZETTI

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San Francisco Opera's unprecedented commitment to expanding the repertoire with new works by leading artists of our time.

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# encore



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# At a Glance

## OMAR

MUSIC BY RHIANNON GIDDENS AND MICHAEL ABELS

LIBRETTO BY RHIANNON GIDDENS

**Structure:** 2 acts, with 1 intermission

**Running time:** 2 hours, 45 minutes

**Language:** Sung in English, with English supertitles

**Key Characters:**

- *Omar*, West African scholar who is enslaved and brought to America
- *Julie*, a friend who helps Omar
- *Fatima*, Omar's mother who speaks to him in dreams
- *Johnson/Owen*, Americans who enslave Omar

*Omar* is the true story of 19th-century Islamic scholar Omar ibn Said, who was taken from his home in West Africa in 1807, forcibly brought to America through the Middle Passage, and sold into slavery in South Carolina. Despite the brutality he faced,

Omar maintained his faith and identity, eventually writing his autobiography in Arabic. This 200-year-old text is the source and inspiration for the first opera by MacArthur Fellowship recipient and Grammy Award-winning musician Rhiannon Giddens and co-composer Michael Abels who is best known for his soundtracks to Jordan Peele's films *Get Out*, *Us*, and *Nope*. The expansive sound world of *Omar*, set to a libretto by Giddens, synthesizes strains of bluegrass, spirituals, the West African kora, folk music, and jazz into a uniquely American musical language.

**Did you know?** *Omar* had its world premiere in May 2022 at Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, South Carolina, the city where Omar ibn Said was forced to enter the United States and sold into slavery. The work, which has been staged in multiple American cities, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music earlier this year.

---

## THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

MUSIC BY GAETANO DONIZETTI

LIBRETTO BY FELICE ROMANI

**Structure:** 2 acts, with 1 intermission

**Running time:** 2 hours, 30 minutes

**Language:** Sung in Italian, with English supertitles

**Key Characters:**

- *Adina*, an independent and wealthy woman who owns the town hotel
- *Nemorino*, a timid waiter who is in love with Adina
- *Dulcamara*, a quack doctor who sells Nemorino an "elixir" to help him win Adina's affection
- *Belcore*, a sergeant in the town's garrison and a swaggering suitor of Adina

Donizetti's tuneful and effervescent comedy follows the hapless Nemorino who pines for Adina, a wise and sophisticated beauty out of his league. Nemorino puts his hopes in a magic elixir sold to him by Dr. Dulcamara to win

her affection. With the elixir—in truth a bottle of Bordeaux wine—Nemorino finds both confidence and new possibilities open to him. This staging by director Daniel Slater and designer Robert Innes Hopkins sets the story in a sun-soaked world of pleasure on the Italian Riviera. Harkening back to Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*, the updated setting finds the heroine as the proprietor of the Hotel Adina where Nemorino works as a waiter.

**Listen for:** Nemorino's aria in the second act, "Una furtiva lagrima" ("A secret tear"), is one the most famous arias in all of opera, but *The Elixir of Love* is filled with memorable melodies. Adina's entrance aria, "Della crudele Isotta" ("Of the cruel Isolde"), is a joyous number that begins like a gentle narrative ballad, telling the story of Tristan and Isolde (well before Wagner wrote his opera), which breaks into lively exchanges with the chorus and culminates in some dazzling vocal fireworks.

## Connection and Inspiration

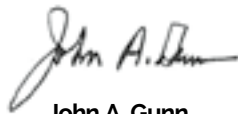
We are delighted to welcome you to the close of our fall season with two very special and entirely different operas in *Omar* and *The Elixir of Love*.

*Omar*, by Grammy Award-winning American singer, instrumentalist, and co-composer Rhiannon Giddens and co-composer Michael Abels, is inspired by the true story of West African scholar Omar ibn Said, enslaved and brought to North Carolina in 1807. He left a number of writings in Arabic, including his autobiography, which form the basis of this deeply moving work. *Omar* won the Pulitzer Prize in Music earlier this year and has found profound resonance in every city in which it is played. It is the second of three new co-commissioned works we present this season, part of the Company's commitment to expanding the repertoire and sharing urgent stories created by leading artistic voices of our time.

Our final opera of the fall season takes us to the sunny Italian Riviera, with Daniel Slater's production of Gaetano Donizetti's effervescent *The Elixir of Love*. It is a delicious comedic romp and a musical banquet of melodies. We're so excited to welcome back San Francisco favorite, tenor Pene Pati, as well as meet a number of wonderful new artists who will bring joyful exuberance to the stage. And on December 1 we have the next in our "Encounter" series—part opera, part party—a fabulous introduction to the Company and to this beautiful theater.

The overarching thread that connects all of these artistic offerings is you, our community of patrons. We are deeply grateful for all that you do to champion this incredible art form. It is your attendance, your advocacy, and your financial support that allow San Francisco Opera to create connection and inspiration for our entire community. Thank you for being champions for this great art form.

Sincerely,



**John A. Gunn**  
Chairman of the Board  
San Francisco Opera Association



**Jack Calhoun**  
President  
San Francisco Opera Association



# San Francisco Opera Association

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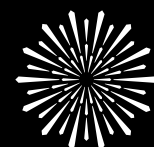
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

# San Francisco Opera News



KRISTEN LOKEN

## CONCERTS ON DECEMBER 2 AND 8

Mark your calendars! On **Saturday, December 2** San Francisco Opera's resident artists, the Adler Fellows, take to the stage of Herbst Theatre with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and maestro Ramón Tebar, conductor for this fall's *The Elixir of Love*, for an evening of arias and scenes. Then, on **Friday, December 8**, the San Francisco Opera Chorus will hold the spotlight in the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater for their annual concert under Chorus Director John Keene with Associate Chorus Master Fabrizio Corona at the piano. For tickets, visit [sfopera.com](http://sfopera.com).



MATTHEW WASHBURN

## Around the World with Eun Sun Kim

Over the next six months, Caroline H. Hume Music Director Eun Sun Kim will be traveling back and forth across the Atlantic with some very exciting musical engagements. Beginning in November, Kim is in Paris to conduct Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and a concert honoring the centenary of soprano Maria Callas. Her New Year begins in Houston with a production of Wagner's *Parsifal*. This is followed by several important engagements including her New York Philharmonic debut in February; concerts in Torino, Duisburg, and Montreal; and performances of Schoenberg's *Erwartung* in Barcelona, Minnesota, and in her debut with the Berlin Philharmonic. Kim returns to San Francisco in May to open the Opera's 2024 Summer Season with Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. And stay tuned for news about an exciting new San Francisco Opera film project about Eun Sun Kim, slated for release next spring.



STEFAN COHEN





Scene from Omar. / CORY WEAVER/LA OPERA

**JOIN US FOR SELECT  
POST-SHOW CHATS  
WITH THE CAST  
AND CREATIVE TEAM  
OF OMAR**

“Tell your story, Omar—you must /  
Or they will never know.”

Following select performances of *Omar* (November 7, 11, 15, 17, and 21), audiences are invited to stay for a post-show conversation that gives space for deeper exploration and processing of Omar ibn Said’s life and legacy. Hear firsthand the experiences of the artists and creative minds behind this opera, including conductor John Kennedy, and performers Jamez McCorkle and Rehanna Thelwell.



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# John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn



TERRENCE MCCARTHY

**O**nce again, the unprecedented generosity of Cynthia and John Gunn has set the stage for a dazzling season at San Francisco Opera. Since 2002, when John joined the Opera Board, the couple has underwritten numerous productions and provided exceptional support for many of the Company’s innovative endeavors. In September 2008, the Gunns made a historic commitment—believed to be the largest gift ever made by individuals to an American opera company—to help fund the signature projects of then General Director David Gockley, including new operas and productions, multimedia projects, and outreach programs, and they have proudly continued that support for General Director Matthew Shilcock. This season, the Gunns’ inspired generosity is helping make possible four productions—*Il Trovatore*, *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, *Lohengrin*, and *The Magic Flute*. The Gunns invite everyone to give and join them as a member of San Francisco Opera’s donor community. John comments, “Opera is a dynamic art form, and all of us play a role in keeping it a meaningful part of our social fabric. With you we can propel San Francisco Opera into its next 100

years of artistic history.” John is the former chairman and CEO of Dodge & Cox Investment Managers. He joined the firm in 1972, the year he received his MBA from Stanford Business School and married Cynthia, who graduated from Stanford with an A.B. in political science in 1970. Early in her career, Cynthia was the editor and director of *The Portable Stanford* book series for 10 years. She edited 28 books by Stanford professors on a vast array of topics, including *Economic Policy Beyond the Headlines* by George Shultz and Ken Dam. In addition to their support of San Francisco Opera, the Gunns are active members of the community. John is a former trustee of Stanford University and is Chairman Emeritus of the Advisory Board for the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. Cynthia currently serves as a trustee of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, is a former overseer of Stanford’s Hoover Institution, and has been a member of the advisory board of Family and Children Services and the board of the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children’s Health. Opera lovers are grateful to Cynthia and John and applaud their commitment to keeping San Francisco Opera a leading-edge company.

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# Donor Spotlight



KRISTEN LOKEN

## **Bob Ellis (Production Sponsor, *Omar*)**

Bob has been a longtime supporter of contemporary opera since he became a member of the board of directors in 2001. He has supported all of John Adams' new productions for San Francisco Opera, beginning with the commission of *Doctor Atomic* in 2005 and continuing with *Girls of the Golden West* in 2017 and this past fall's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Along with Gabriela Lena Frank and Nilo Cruz's *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*, other production sponsorships have included Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Olivier Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise*, and the 2011 premiere of Francesca Zambello's production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle. He has also served on the boards of Opera Parallèle, OPERA America, and Central City Opera.



DREW ALTIZER

## **Louise Gund (Production Sponsor, *Omar*)**

Louise Gund is an accomplished theater producer with a wide range of artistic talents. She has produced twelve Broadway plays and musicals, winning a Tony Award and Drama Desk Award for *All the Way*, and receiving three additional Tony Award nominations. A subscriber to San Francisco Opera since 2010, Louise has served on the Opera's board of directors since 2013. She has also served on the boards of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cal Performances, Earthjustice, and the Berkeley Community Chorus and Orchestra. In addition to her major support of these organizations, she is an environmental activist and a staunch advocate on behalf of women's and children's issues. She was awarded the San Francisco Opera Spirit of the Opera Award in 2019 for devoted service to the Company and was the inspiration behind the Opera's Producers

Circle. Louise is passionate about enabling creativity to flourish, telling stories of meaning, and ensuring a vibrant future for the arts.

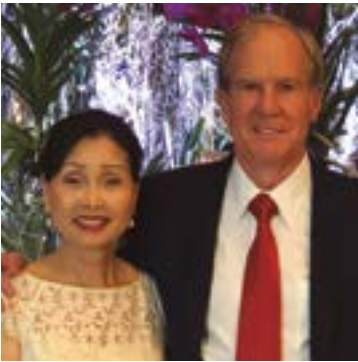


## **Koret Foundation (Production Sponsor, *Omar*)**

San Francisco Opera is deeply grateful to the Koret Foundation for its support of *Omar*. This funding is part of the Foundation's generous three-year grant supporting new works, which began in the Centennial Season. "Koret is pleased to support this exciting new work and looks forward to more opportunities to bring new voices and stories to the opera stage," says Jeffrey A. Farber, Koret Foundation CEO. Koret has been a longtime supporter of San Francisco Opera's transformational stage productions, as well as education and community programs. Most recently, Koret supported San Francisco Opera's sold-out co-commission *El último sueño de Frida y Diego* by composer Gabriela Lena Frank and librettist Nilo Cruz. "We are honored by Koret's

longstanding partnership which helps us bring the best quality opera to the broadest audiences in ways that are reflective of and relevant to our community," says General Director Matthew Shilcock.

# Donor Spotlight



DREW ALTIZER PHOTOGRAPHY

## **Jerome and Thao Dodson (Production Sponsor, *The Elixir of Love*)**

“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*, Thao, already an opera lover, suggested to Jerry that they go.

*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.



## **Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem (Production Sponsor, *The Elixir of Love*) Sponsor, through the Conductors Fund: John Kennedy (*Omar*); Ramón Tebar (*Elixir*). Sponsor, through the Emerging Stars Fund: Jamez McCorkle, Taylor Raven, and Brittany Renee (*Omar*); Pene Pati and Slávka Zámečnicková (*Elixir*)**

Jan and Maria both developed a love of opera at a young age, although they grew up half-a-world apart. Jan Shrem, after a career devoted to his publishing businesses in Japan and Europe, created Clos Pegase Winery in California’s Napa Valley, collecting some of the world’s greatest modern and contemporary art. Maria Manetti Shrem internationally succeeded with her fashion-based entrepreneurial companies, bringing Gucci and Fendi in the departments and specialty stores in the USA.

In joyous partnership the Manetti Shrem couple is bringing their focus and affection to philanthropic causes that advance education, the performing and visual arts, and medicine.

While their lives led them each around the globe, their individual passions eventually 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 helps ensure the continued appearances of noted conductors in the orchestra pit.
- The Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund helps bring today’s most compelling artists in Italian repertoire to San Francisco Opera.
- The Emerging Stars Fund supports the Company in showcasing exciting rising young stars on our stage throughout the season.
- The Luminaries Concert Fund enables San Francisco Opera to bring legendary artists to the stage for special events and performances.

In December 2022, Maria received The Spirit of the Opera award for her devotion to San Francisco Opera, her high level of commitment to advancing the success of the Company, and her ongoing support of the art form. She is the 2023 UC Davis Medal recipient for her profound arts legacy and passion for creating opportunities for exploration and education.

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SCAN TO DONATE



# Omar Giving Circle

San Francisco Opera is honored to recognize donors for their support of Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels' *Omar* and their participation in this special **Omar Giving Circle**. This broad-based effort welcomes new supporters who, together, are helping to bring this important work to our community. There is still time to join the Omar Giving Circle by calling (415) 565-3212. Donors will be added to our digital recognition and will receive a special commemorative pin! Please see page 15 for more details. This listing reflects gifts received through October 2, 2023.

## **OLIVE TREE** **\$30,000 +**

Marcia Barinaga & Corey Goodman  
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Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem

## **TAMA** **\$7,280 +**

Sylvia R. Lindsey

## **BLUEGRASS** **\$4,000 +**

Robert M. Anderson & Kyong Shik Eom  
Jamie & Philip Bowles  
Anonymous

## **SCHOLAR** **\$1,831 +**

Dr. Barbara Lynn Bessey  
Dr. Judy C. Miner

## **AKONTING** **\$517 +**

Arthur Strange



KRISTEN LOKEN

# The Future Is Now: Adlers in Concert

Join us for an exciting night of unforgettable music featuring conductor Ramón Tebar and San Francisco Opera's Resident Artists in their final concert of the year.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2023 | 7:30PM | HERBST THEATRE, 401 VAN NESS AVENUE**  
**BUY TICKETS | (415) 864-3330 | SFOPERA.COM/FUTUREISNOW**

KRISTEN LOKEN

# Omar Giving Circle

Join a special new giving circle, available for new and increased gifts to support Rhiannon Giddens' and Michael Abels' *Omar*. *Omar* is the true story of a 19th-century Islamic scholar from West Africa, enslaved in South Carolina, but who found and expressed identity and faith through the written word. The Omar Giving Circle is a broad-based effort beginning at only \$22, embracing gifts of all sizes are vital to bring this important work to our community.



## TAMBOURINE \$22

Encircled by repeating pairs of metal discs, the "22" level is inspired by the prominence of the tambourine in the opera. Most scholars agree that the origins of the tambourine date back to 1700 BCE or even earlier, and it appears in sacred texts from West Africa, Turkey, Greece, Italy, India, and throughout the Middle East.



## KUFI \$120

The traditional hat worn by Omar in the opera is called a Kufi, from the Kufi script it resembles. It plays a significant role in the opera as Julie, an enslaved woman, becomes close to Omar. The Kufi script is thought to have gone into general use in the 12th century. The hat is a part of the national dress of many West African countries and symbolizes African descent in many American cultures.



## AKONTING \$517

The akonting is an African gourd lute known as the ancestor of the modern banjo played by co-composer Rhiannon Giddens, who studied the instrument. The three strings of the akonting are tuned to the pattern 5-1-7, which inspires the name for this level! (7-note scale with 7th, 5th, and 1st notes.)



## SCHOLAR \$1,831

The best known of the scholar Omar Ibn Said's writings is his autobiographical essay, "The Life of Omar ibn Said." Written in 1831, the work forms the basis of the opera.



## BLUEGRASS \$4,000

In honor of co-composer Rhiannon Giddens' frequent genre, bluegrass. Bluegrass was born out of North American blues music which was directly influenced by West African music. Recognized as a new American art form in the 1940s, Bluegrass is a fusion of music styles and experiences, much like the fusion of opera, Senegalese, and American styles found in *Omar*.



## TAMA \$7,280

The Senegalese tama, or talking drum, is known to project sounds imitating human speech across a seven-to-eight kilometer distance, or 7-2-8. Omar ibn Said was originally abducted from West Africa, in the Futa Toro region (modern-day Senegal) where the tama is played widely and used to send messages as well as make music.



## OLIVE TREE \$30,000+

Omar sings of the olive tree during the moment of darkness when his humanity is attacked, "The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, which is within a glass, which is like a brilliant star fueled by a blessed tree, an olive tree, neither Eastern nor Western, whose oil would almost glow, even if untouched by fire." The themes of our shared humanity can be seen in the symbol of the olive tree.

### GIFT LEVELS AND BENEFITS

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**Renée Fleming, soprano**  
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**Feb 9**  
 ZELLERBACH HALL

**Erin Morley, soprano**  
**Malcolm Martineau, piano**

One of today's most in-demand lyric coloratura sopranos, Erin Morley has appeared in more than 100 Met performances, most notably as Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Olympia in *Tales of Hoffmann*, Constance in *Les Dialogues des Carmélites*, and Pamina in *The Magic Flute*. Here the supremely sensitive Martin Martineau joins Morley for this magical recital performance.



**Feb 18**  
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**Ema Nikolovska, mezzo-soprano**  
**Howard Watkins, piano**

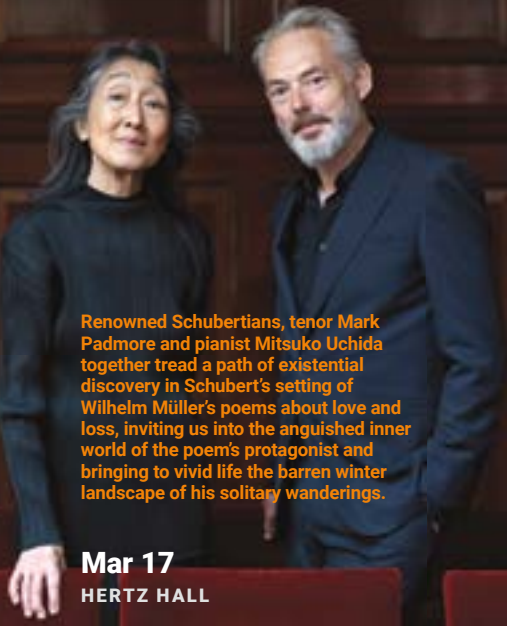
Possessing a rare combination of artistic sensitivity and technical skill and with an impressive array of honors already in hand, the young mezzo-soprano Emma Nikolovska visits with a program featuring songs by Schubert, Robert Schumann, and Debussy in her Cal Performances debut.



**Mar 10**  
 HERTZ HALL

**Mark Padmore, tenor**  
**Mitsuko Uchida, piano**  
 Schubert's *Winterreise*

Renowned Schubertians, tenor Mark Padmore and pianist Mitsuko Uchida together tread a path of existential discovery in Schubert's setting of Wilhelm Müller's poems about love and loss, inviting us into the anguished inner world of the poem's protagonist and bringing to vivid life the barren winter landscape of his solitary wanderings.



**Mar 17**  
 HERTZ HALL

**Jakub Józef Orliński, countertenor**  
**Il Pomo d'Oro**  
*Beyond*

Riveting Polish countertenor Jakub Józef Orliński returns to Berkeley this season with the sensational ensemble Il Pomo d'Oro, in a program of rarely performed works from the 16th and 17th centuries—by Monteverdi, Caccini, Frescobaldi, Cavalli, Strozzi, and others.



**Apr 9**  
 ZELLERBACH HALL

**Amina Edris, soprano**  
**Pene Pati, tenor**  
**Robert Mollicone, piano**  
*Voyages*

Works by Duparc, Ravel, Saint-Saëns, Quilter, and Vaughan Williams, and traditional songs from Egypt and Samoa



Darlings of the opera world, the wife and husband duo of soprano Amina Edris and tenor Pene Pati returns to the Bay Area with a varied program of songs traversing eras and continents.

**Apr 23**  
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August 1, 2022 through September 6, 2023

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We are forever grateful for their visionary philanthropy.

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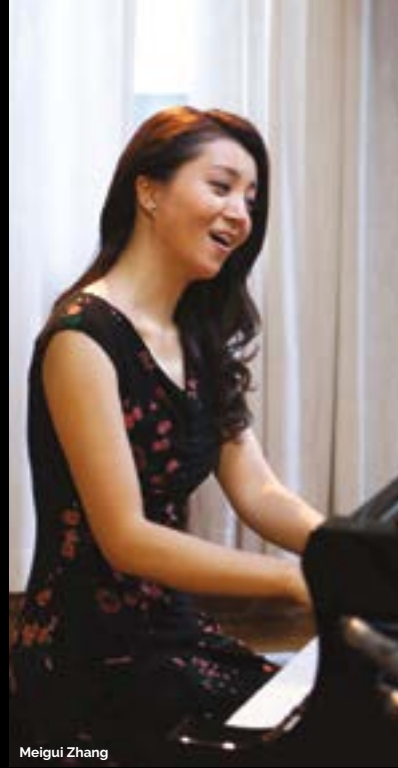




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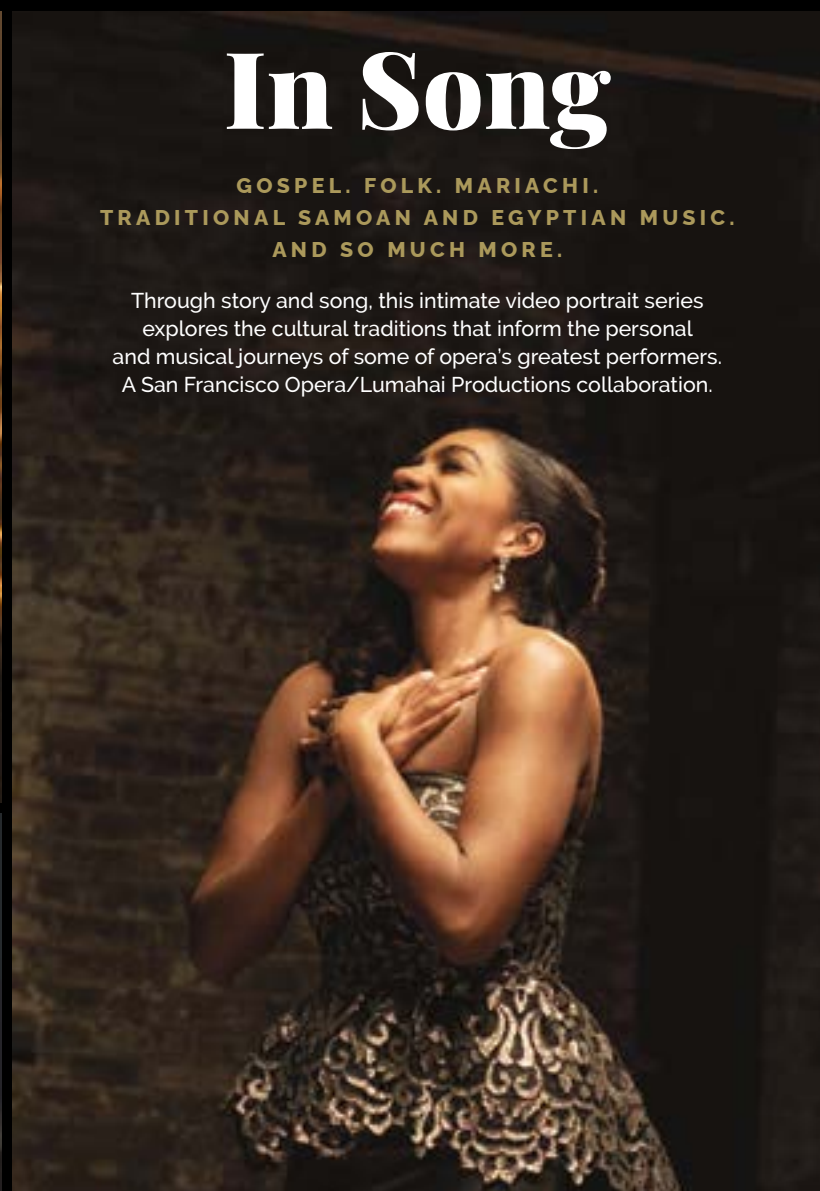
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Pretty Yende

# The Elixir of Love

**OPERA IN TWO ACTS BY GAETANO DONIZETTI  
LIBRETTO BY FELICE ROMANI**

This production is made possible, in part, by  
Jerome and Thao Dodson  
San Francisco Opera Guild  
and Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem  
through the Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund

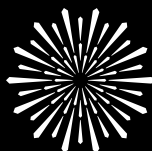
Ramón Tebar's appearance is made possible  
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Pene Pati and Slávka Zámečnicková's appearances are made possible by  
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A co-production of  
San Francisco Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago,  
originally created by Opera North

**NOVEMBER 19, 24, 26, 29; DECEMBER 5, 9, 2023**



**SAN FRANCISCO  
OPERA**

# The Elixir of Love

## ACT I

In a small Italian village, a poor young waiter, Nemorino, is hopelessly in love with the capricious and unattainable hotel owner, Adina. He listens longingly as she reads aloud the tale of Tristan and Isolde; their love was inflamed by the drinking of a magic potion.

The swaggering Captain Belcore arrives to the hotel, flirting shamelessly with Adina. The jealous Nemorino is appalled when Belcore asks for Adina's hand in marriage. She evades answering. Fearful of losing Adina, Nemorino declares his love for her. Kindly, but firmly, she turns him down.

A second visitor drops in—the colorful and charismatic Doctor Dulcamara. Claiming to offer a miraculous cure for every ill, he begins to peddle his wares. Nemorino, believing that the hand of fate is helping him, asks Dulcamara if he stocks Isolde's love potion. Seizing the chance to make some easy money, Dulcamara instantly produces the elixir of love. It will not, he warns, take effect for 24 hours. By the time Nemorino discovers it's nothing but cheap wine, the Doctor will have left the village.

Nemorino, who has never touched alcohol before, proceeds to drink the entire bottle. He quickly grows more cheerful and confident. Seeing Adina, he adopts an air of lofty indifference. Piqued by Nemorino's change in attitude, Adina informs Belcore that she will marry him at the end of the week.

The Captain's officers arrive with orders to return to duty the following morning, prompting Belcore to suggest expediting the wedding to that very evening. Nemorino is horrified; by the time the love potion works its magic, Adina will be married. He pleads with her but to no avail. Adina and Belcore make preparations for their nuptials.

## —INTERMISSION—

## ACT II

The pre-wedding party is in full swing. Dulcamara invites Adina to sing a duet with him. Belcore summons a lawyer to arrange the wedding contract, but Adina, annoyed by Nemorino's apparent absence, decides to wait before putting pen to paper.

Nemorino, in despair at the prospect of losing the love of his life, begs Doctor Dulcamara for another dose of the love potion. The Doctor says he will be happy to oblige—in return for hard cash, of course. The penniless Nemorino is easy prey for his rival, Belcore, who offers him money to enlist.

What Nemorino does not know is that his uncle has just passed away, leaving him a fortune. Giannetta, one of Adina's employees, has heard the news and passes it on to the women in the village. Nemorino has become the most eligible bachelor in the area. Initially bewildered and still unaware, he attributes his sudden popularity to the effects of the elixir. Even Dulcamara starts to believe in the power of his own potion.

Adina, now fearing that she is about to lose Nemorino to another woman, finally acknowledges the strength of her feelings for him and resolves to win him back. In the famous aria "Una furtiva lagrima" Nemorino dares to hope that his dream may be about to come true. It does! Adina, having repaid Belcore the recruitment fee, confesses to Nemorino that she loves him. Hearing of the inheritance is an added bonus. Belcore leaves empty-handed, but Dulcamara, attributing all this success to the power of his elixir, departs in triumph.

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**First performance:** Milan, Teatro della Canobbiana, May 12, 1832

**First performance in the U.S.:** New York, Park Theatre, June 18, 1838

**First San Francisco Opera performance:** September 14, 1929

**Personnel:** 6 principals, 40 choristers, 2 supernumeraries; **48 total**

**Orchestra:** 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 3 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 timpanist, 3 percussion, 1 harp, 1 fortepiano, 40 strings; **62 total**

**Onstage Banda:** 1 trumpet, 1 tuba, 1 piano

**Offstage Banda:** 1 trumpet

Conductor

**Ramón Tebar** \*

Director

**Daniel Slater**

Associate Director/Choreographer

**Tim Claydon** \*

Production Designer

**Robert Innes Hopkins**

Lighting Designer

**Simon Mills**

Chorus Director

**John Keene**

Assistant Conductor

**Robert Mollicone**

Prompter

**Matthew Piatt**

Fortepiano Continuo

**Bryndon Hassman**

Musical Preparation

**Bryndon Hassman**

**Kseniia Polstiankina Barrad**

**Marika Yasuda** †

**John Churchwell**

**Fabrizio Corona**

Diction

**Alessandra Cattani**

Supertitles

**Jerry Sherk**

**Francesca Zambello**

Assistant Director

**Roy Rallo**

Stage Manager

**Darin Burnett**

Assistant Stage Managers

**Jayne O'Hara**

**Megan Coutts**

**Collette Berg**

Dance Master

**Colm Seery**

Fight Director

**Dave Maier**

Technical Supervisor

**Lawren Gregory**

Costume Supervisor

**Galen Till**

Hair and Makeup

**Jeanna Parham**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2023 • 2 PM

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24 • 7:30 PM

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26 • 2 PM

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 • 7:30 PM

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5 • 7:30 PM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9 • 7:30 PM

# The Elixir of Love

## L'Elisir d'Amore

Opera in two acts by **Gaetano Donizetti**

Libretto by **Felice Romani**

(Sung in Italian with English supertitles)

## CAST

(in order of vocal appearance)

<i>Giannetta</i>	<b>Arianna Rodriguez</b> †
<i>Nemorino</i>	<b>Pene Pati</b>
	<b>Jonah Hoskins</b> * (11/29)
<i>Adina</i>	<b>Slávka Zámečnicková</b> *
<i>Sergeant Belcore</i>	<b>David Bizic</b> *
<i>Dulcamara</i>	<b>Renato Girolami</b> *
<i>The Mate</i>	<b>Randy Lee</b> *

*Guests and staff of the Hotel Adina, local residents, and visiting Italian sailors*

\* San Francisco Opera debut † Current Adler Fellow

**TIME AND PLACE:** 1950s, a small Italian village

## ACT I

—INTERMISSION—

## ACT II

*The performance will last approximately two hours and thirty minutes with one intermission.*

*Latecomers may not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed.*

*Patrons who leave during the performance may not be reseated until intermission.*

*The use of cameras, cell phones, and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden.*

*Please turn off and refrain from using all electronic devices.*

# A Conversation with Director Daniel Slater



LIINA VIRU

## **What makes *The Elixir of Love* a great opera?**

I'm not sure many opera comedies deserve the appellation "great," but I think *The Elixir of Love* is a shining exception. Donizetti manages to tell a winning story with believable characters whom we can relate to and recognize. It's grounded in a fundamental idea that everyone in the audience immediately "gets": the shy boy who's in love with the impossibly glamorous (and, he thinks, unobtainable) girl. Then, Donizetti develops that tale through music that fizzes with energy, charm, and beauty.

## **This production takes place during the Italian "La Dolce Vita" period in the 1950s and illuminates a period of glamour, in addition to providing an opportunity for audience members to go on a virtual holiday! Why did you choose this setting to tell the story of *The Elixir of Love*?**

Designer Robert Innes Hopkins and I knew we wanted to pull the story out of its nineteenth-century rustic roots and find the perfect period in which to replant it. There is an innocence (at least in our minds) associated with the 1950s, which seems to provide the ideal setting for the naïveté of the

story's hero (and also perhaps the chorus). On top of that, the "Dolce Vita" period gave us the chance to put Adina, Giannetta, and some of the chorus ladies in rather fabulous dresses!

## **The chorus plays an active role in this production. Could you tell us more about how you utilize this wonderful ensemble?**

I'm very excited to be working with the Chorus, with whom I enjoyed such a happy collaboration on *Lohengrin* (2012) and *The Cunning Little Vixen* (2004). I am hoping and expecting that the ensemble will relish the chance to inhabit the various characters we've created to populate the onstage village. Rather than turning them into a unit of, say, farmers, we've given them a variety of characters: tourists, hotel staff, locals, and naval officers. There are some distinct personalities within those groupings (including some American tourists!).

## **It's been said that it's much more difficult to produce comedy than drama. What are your thoughts on humor in opera, and how does Donizetti's music support humor in this story?**



So much of comedy is about finding the right rhythm, and that's somehow easier in "straight" theater because the director and actors create their own pacing—as long as you have performers with the natural ability to time a gag. In opera, of course, that rhythm is largely set by the composer, and that person may have created a musical rhythm for a particular moment that now feels a little dated or cliché. With a good collaboration between the conductor and director, however—which Ramón Tebar and I are looking forward to creating—many of those problems can be offset and the humor nuanced. Having done many opera comedies over the last twenty years in both translation and in the original language, I'm acutely aware of a very specific issue with opera comedy: although great music can support humor, what we primarily find funny is text. When the text is in a language the audience doesn't speak, it is reliant on the supertitles. We must get that text absolutely right and also trust that the supertitle operator will land the joke at the right moment! For this reason, it's quite common to find directors falling back on visual gags that aren't dependent on these tricky matters, but something in me resists humor that can border dangerously on slapstick. There is a risk that "opera comedy" ends up being a kind of comedy you never see elsewhere, whereas I endeavor to base the choices that performers and I make on the greatest possible source of inspiration: real life.

**Although *The Elixir of Love* is hilarious and charming, there are also moments of vulnerability and seriousness for the characters. How do you strike a balance between funny and more contemplative moments?**

The wonderful thing is that, to a large extent, Donizetti has already done that for us—which goes back to why it's such a great opera! The joyous wit of the second Adina/Nemorino duet is then painfully offset by his heart-wrenching plea, "Adina, credimi," that soon follows. What I hope to achieve is to take the characters and their motivations seriously, with those intentions sometimes resulting in moments of pure comedy but also in moments of vulnerability and uncertainty. This is partly why Ramón and I were keen to present *The Elixir of Love* with as few cuts as possible. Cuts to nineteenth-century comic operas tend to mean cutting repeats in fast music, which disturbs Donizetti's careful balance of fast and slow, comic and contemplative. This creates an imbalance that leans toward slower music—too much contemplation, not enough fun!—with the result that the cut piece can actually feel slower than a version without edits.

**What are some of the challenges that present themselves when bringing this opera to life?**

I feel that the major challenges are related to presenting these nineteenth-century characters to a 2023 audience. All of them veer close—perhaps dangerously close, for twenty-first-century taste—toward archetypes: the capricious beauty, the simple farmhand, the handsome-but-dumb soldier, the quack doctor, the soprano's friend. I've seen productions in which our desire to see the hero and heroine united has been undermined by an Adina who seems insensitive and careless in comparison to a sensitive and engaging Nemorino or a Nemorino who comes across as far too foolish to make a good match for Adina's sparkling intelligence. I'm also interested in making Belcore a genuine contender for Adina's hand. He's someone suave, sophisticated, and confident—everything that Nemorino is not. It's more engaging and less predictable if she has a believable choice. In the end, she opts for Nemorino, who is loving and faithful—everything that Belcore is not. It's also rewarding, I think, to plot a journey for Dulcamara. Instead of remaining brazenly dishonest and money-grabbing, something about Nemorino's plight touches him and leads him to help our hero win Adina's hand. Finally, Giannetta, who is so lightly drawn by Donizetti and his librettist Romani ... in her one important scene in the second half of Act II, she seems to express genuine romantic interest in Nemorino; what if that had been there since the start of the opera?

**Is there anything else you would like to share with our audiences?**

Part of filling out Giannetta's role is to make her a more constant presence with Adina. This augments her pain by forcing her into the presence of a man whom she loves but who loves another and provides someone to listen to Adina's growing frustrations with Nemorino. There is something about the *a parte* ("aside") tradition in nineteenth-century Italian comic opera that I find problematic; it's rather self-conscious and knowing. By contrast, when characters are being honest about their feelings, I encourage singers to share those thoughts directly with the audience. So, Nemorino, who is never anything but honest, is the only character in the first half of the opera who—if you like—speaks to us. Adina shares her feelings via the intermediary of Giannetta; Belcore via his best mate; and Dulcamara via his cheeky-chappy, mini-me boy assistant. In the second scene of Act II, when Adina starts to be candid about her feelings for Nemorino, she abandons Giannetta and engages immediately with the audience. 🌟

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*A version of this interview was previously published by Lyric Opera of Chicago.*

# Elixir's *Heartbeat*

BY FRED COHN



*Gino Quilico as Belcore and Ruth Ann Swenson as Adina in 1992. / MARTY SOHL*

**G**aetano Donizetti was in full possession of his mature powers in 1832 when, at age 34, he wrote *L'Elisir d'Amore*, aka *The Elixir of Love*.

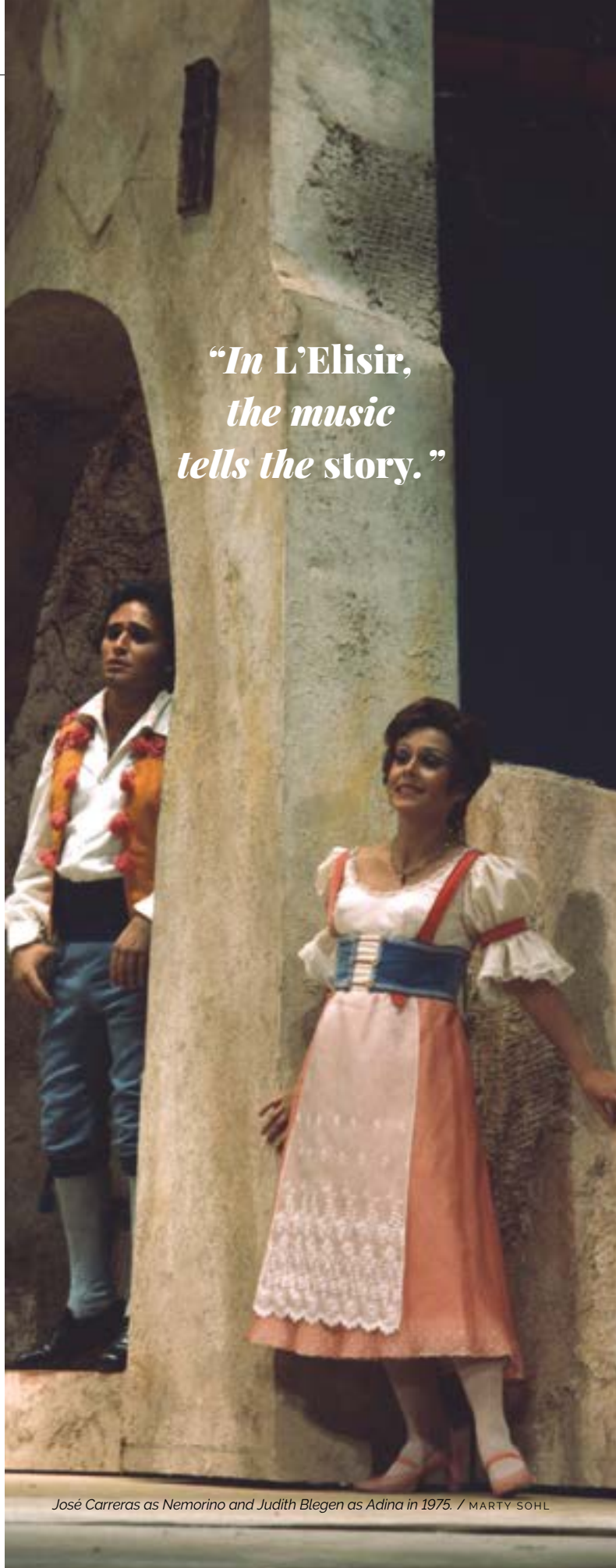
Just a year and a half before, in late 1830, he achieved his first unequivocal triumph with the premiere of *Anna Bolena* at Milan's Teatro Carcano. He was by no means a novice at that point: He had been composing operas since 1817, and his works had been mounted in theaters throughout Italy. Some had been outright flops; others had achieved limited success. But in the context of his achievements of the early 1830s—*Bolena*, *L'Elisir*, *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835)—his early years can be seen as an apprenticeship: a period in which he mastered the craft of writing operas and found ways to marry his gift for melodic invention with a burgeoning talent for creating drama through music.

The composer's newfound mastery can be heard throughout *L'Elisir*. Although the opera abounds with lyrical invention, its success is due not just to its melodic appeal but also to the dramatic aptness of Donizetti's musical invention. In *L'Elisir*, the music tells the story.

*L'Elisir's* librettist, Felice Romani, adapted his text from Daniel Auber's *Le Philtre*, a recent Paris Opera success. He retained the plot of Eugène Scribe's original libretto: A country bumpkin, hopelessly in love with a beautiful, capricious landowner, buys a phony "love potion" from a traveling salesman and ultimately wins the heart of his beloved. The French original was an out-and-out farce, but Romani, at Donizetti's urging, added moments of pure tenderness, and they transformed the peasant protagonist from a figure of fun into a true romantic hero. By the standards of its time, *Le Philtre* was extraordinarily durable, performed for three decades after its premiere. But thereafter it receded into obscurity, while *L'Elisir* has held its place in the repertory continuously since its first performance. Its lasting success can no doubt be attributed to the veins of lyricism that the creators layered into its comic-opera texture.

The Italian comedy of the era that most rivals *L'Elisir's* endurance is Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, from 1816. The two works make a study in contrasts. *Barbiere* keeps its farce mechanism tightly wound: You can sense the delight that Rossini and his librettist (Cesare Sterbini) took in keeping their characters whirling in and out of predicaments. *L'Elisir*, too, traffics in the misunderstandings and crossed signals of farce, but its real focus is the human feelings that motivates them. *Barbiere* sparkles; *L'Elisir* warms the heart.

*“In L’Elisir,  
the music  
tells the story.”*



José Carreras as Nemorino and Judith Blegen as Adina in 1975. / MARTY SOHL



Luciano Pavarotti as Nemorino, Reri Grist as Adina, and Shigemitsu Matsumoto as Giannetta with the San Francisco Opera Chorus in the 1969 production. / ROBERT CAHEN

The opening chorus, “Bel conforto al mietitore,” is standard comic-opera stuff: happy villagers, led by the peasant girl Giannetta, celebrating the harvest in jaunty 6/8 time. But right at its close, in a kind of musical jump-cut, the tenor hero Nemorino introduces himself with a cavatina, “Quanto è bella,” rhapsodizing over his beloved Adina. It is more of a song than a full-scale aria, consisting of 32 measures of music and running its full course in two-and-a-half minutes. But its emotional impact is immense. The upward leaps of the opening phrase could be aural metaphors for longing. Nemorino slows down midway as he sings the words “I’m a complete fool. I only know how to sigh”: It is as if the intensity of his feeling has disrupted the music’s forward momentum. When he then repeats the opening strain, the flute and clarinet double his voice, adding to the plaintiveness of his outpouring.

At the close of “Quanto è bella,” Nemorino leads the villagers in a repeat of the opening chorus. We are still ensconced in the territory of comic opera. But the cavatina

has the effect of breaking through the genre constraints and bringing us into a deeper expressive domain.

Adina has fewer occasions than her swain does for lyrical effusion. This imbalance is built into *L’Elisir*’s scenario, which calls for her to spend much of the action teasing Nemorino and dodging his supplications. In her coquette mode, she is kin to *Barbiere*’s peppery Rosina, especially in “Quanto amore,” her Act II duet with the charlatan Dulcamara: a number that dazzles in the Rossinian manner.

But we see another side to her at the very climax of the first act, in an ensemble that beckons us into *L’Elisir*’s emotional core. “Adina, credimi” is a prime manifestation of the Italian-opera convention of the “pezzo concertato”—literally, “concerted piece.” These numbers are usually placed near the end of a central act of a piece, at the point when the dramatic tensions approach their breaking point. Time stops; the characters advance to the footlights and sing of their conflicting emotions. Almost every Italian opera of the 1800s had a *pezzo concertato*, and Donizetti

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**“L’Elisir ...  
traffics in the  
misunderstandings  
and crossed signals  
of farce,  
but its real focus is  
the human feelings  
that motivates them.”**

---

himself soon wrote the most famous of them all: the sextet from *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

“Adina, credimi” comes right when the ambiguous romantic tie between Nemorino and Adina seems on the verge of snapping. She has spitefully announced her plan to marry the fatheaded Sergeant Belcore that very evening. The credulous Nemorino thinks that Dulcamara’s spurious potion will take effect on the morrow, and in the ensemble’s opening statement he pleads with her to wait one more day. The melody he sings bears a family resemblance to that of “Quanto è bella,” but the cavatina’s first gesture rose up an octave. Nemorino’s initial measures here cover the same span, but they move downward: Hopeful supplication has given way to tragicomic dejection.

Belcore issues gruff threats after Nemorino’s melody, and Adina attempts a defense, explaining that the lad is “mezzo pazzo”—half mad. Her vocal line, significantly, is a repeat of Nemorino’s: Although Adina and Nemorino express divergent sentiments, they are on the same emotional wavelength. As the number develops, everyone on stage joins in, the whole culminating in a magical coda, punctuated by a skipping 16th-note figure, sung by Giannetta. Her words are immaterial; what matters is the musical gesture, imitating the beating of a heart. The close of “Adina, credimi” brings us face-to-face with *L’Elisir*’s emotional essence.

Adina gets her definitive moment for tenderness in the second-act aria “Prendi, per me.” It occurs at the opera’s denouement, when she at last reveals her love for Nemorino. At its opening, the flute and oboe offer a brief



Ramón Vargas as Nemorino and Ji Young Yang as Giannetta in 2008.  
TERRENCE MCCARTHY

preview of its main strain, the winds signifying tenderness just as they do in “Quanto è bella”: Adina has entered into Nemorino’s emotional territory. The melody in its underlying contours is as simple as that of Nemorino’s cavatina, but its surface is replete with ornamentation: grace notes, turns, coloratura flourishes. In other contexts, these would be opportunities for prima-donna display, but not here; instead, they allow Adina to probe ever-more-intensely into the depths of her devotion.

“Prendi, per me” offers the audience a true sense of resolution. It is a moment of absolute calm: The agitation that has characterized so much of *L’Elisir* has melted away. We have entered the happy realm that Donizetti’s musical strategies have implicitly promised us from the start. 🌸

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*Fred Cohn is a writer and editor whose work has appeared in Opera News, Musical America, Opera, Opera America, and Chamber Music, among other publications.*

**ART WITHOUT ARTIFICE**



**Pene Pati  
Reflects  
on His Life as  
an Opera Singer**

BY LOUISE T. GUINTHER

*Pene Pati*. / SIMON FOWLER AND PARLOPHONE RECORDS LTD

**P**ene Pati's smile can light up a room, even via Zoom from Toronto, where he was singing *La Bohème* opposite his wife, Amina Edris, when we spoke in early October. The tenor treats an interviewer like an old friend and laughs easily and often as he talks about his life and career.

The story of Pati's Samoan–New Zealand origins is well known to San Francisco audiences; he has been a Bay Area presence since his early days in the Merola Opera and Adler Fellowship programs. "From there, the relationship just grew and grew and grew," he says. "It became my home. If you have a place that takes you in, you're very loyal to that place. It's been the company that really catapulted me into the operatic scene."

Pati cherishes his special relationship with his San Francisco public. "They've seen me take the stage from the very start, as a timid singer, trying to figure it out, and grow into this artist. All my musicality was really formed in that company. They've gotten to see this transformation, and I think the exciting part is to [not only] see how the voice has turned out but really how the *person* has turned out. You go back, and you hope that you're the same person that left their shores, so to speak."

Continuity and connection are important to Pati. "The biggest joy is knowing that I came from a place where opera doesn't even exist, Samoa, to New Zealand, where it's very rare, and made it to a level that is quite impossible," he says. "Kiri Te Kanawa was really the only one. When we were studying, it was kind of a far-fetched dream. To be on the stage now and reflect upon the journey ... I like to think that I contributed in some way to some budding artists."

Pati's latest San Francisco Opera assignment is particularly dear to him. "I relate to Nemorino so much," he says. "I'm such a goof when it comes to [romance]. In my dating years—I'm now married, of course—I was such a nervous date because I'm not particularly chiseled, with the six-pack abs or anything. So I'd just be like, 'I'm personable. I'm a personality.' Nemorino is very innocent. He's like, 'I may not be the most nice-looking guy, but hey, I'm a good guy.' Before even the music, what appealed to

me was that character of being fun, being vulnerable, being innocent. The attributes of Nemorino are so me!"

Pati has rapidly established himself on international stages, but he emphasizes the importance of not trying to do too much too soon. "I hit the shores of Europe quite fast, and it was really hard to comprehend what was happening and stay grounded," he says. "I always seem to be drawn by companies to do things that are too big for my voice, and I always have to tell them, 'No, it's not right [for me] right now. Surely there is someone else who is better suited for this role than me.' Europe has really changed my perspective in terms of vocal safety, because there's so *much* opera, you have to figure out, 'What can I sing, what *should* I sing, and what should I say no to and leave my pride aside?'"

He notes that the challenges of heavier roles are not purely vocal. "I feel like if I were to just stand there and sing something big—*Tosca* or *Pagliacci*—it's possible when I'm just standing there, but when you're *in* the opera, you get carried away with so much emotion that you end up pushing. So when I consider a role, I think, 'Okay, would I be "characteristically" ready for this, or would I be pushing?' At this stage I probably would [push], because I want to give so much passion.

"I try to build the calendar with two or three new roles but still stick in the realm of what I do well, so that the transition is nice and smooth, and I don't lose the timbre in the voice shift. Because once you get to the heavier stuff, there's no turning back. My heart would *love* to do big things, like [Verdi's] *Otello*, but my brain is saying, 'You can wait.'"

Pati's list of coming attractions is telling. "Hoffmann is coming up, Werther is coming up, Faust." He notes that French repertoire "suits my personality. The Italians are strong passion." He adopts an almost growling emphasis. "*I LOVE YOU!!*" And because of that, you love their passion, but you can also push the voice a lot. Whereas the French have this unique, caressing style. They're like, 'I really love you—now let me tell you *why* I love you.' They go through all the colors of the voice. It can be very soft

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***"[San Francisco] became my home. If you have a place that takes you in, you're very loyal to that place. It's been the company that really catapulted me into the operatic scene."***

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In Song: Pene Pati  
([sfopera.com/insong](https://sfopera.com/insong)) in 2021.  
LUKE FOLEY-MARTIN



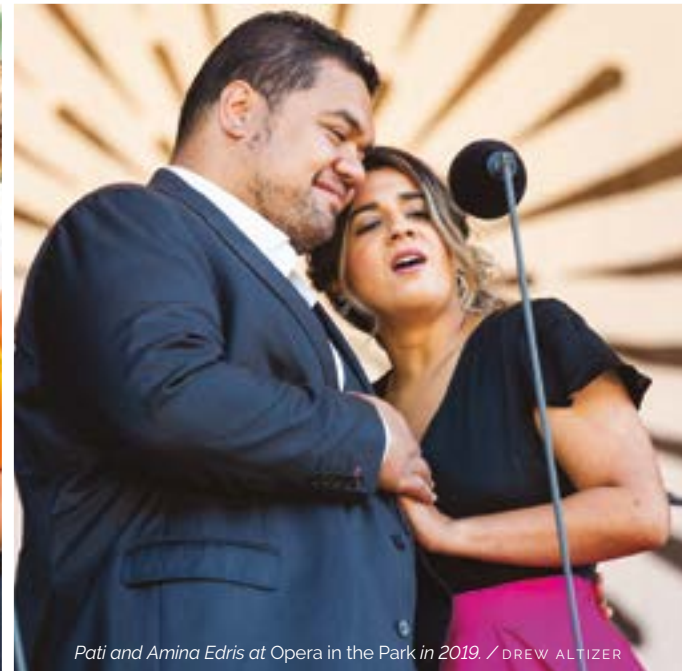
Centennial Season opening night concert in 2022.  
KRISTEN LOKEN



Duke of Manuta in  
*Rigoletto* in 2017.  
CORY WEAVER



Opera in the Park in 2019. / DREW ALTIZER



Pati and Amina Edris at Opera in the Park in 2019. / DREW ALTIZER

and intimate and then also very powerful, as you can see in Don José. He's got a huge, huge personality towards the end of *Carmen*, but then you've got [his tender, Act II aria] 'La fleur que tu m'avais jetée.'"

Pati's onstage persona is a blend of boyish diffidence and kinetic energy suffused with a certain lyric grace that lends a romantic cast even to comic portrayals. His singing is art without artifice: the sound is clean, pure, and unostentatious, as if singing were his natural form of expression. So embedded is the lyric art in Pati's culture that he claims he "didn't even know singing was a talent" until a choral instructor pointed him toward serious vocal study. Perhaps that explains the instant rapport he seems to achieve across the footlights.

"The most heartwarming thing is people appreciating

your honesty onstage," he says. "I go out there, and I sing. I'm not trying to be technical. I've spent so many years honing my technique, so I try to get onstage and just forget about all that and let it happen, and be *human* onstage. A lot of times, you watch an opera singer, and you can actively see that they're thinking about their technique. And the audience is not stupid. They can see straightaway when someone is trying to fake their way through. And someone who is genuinely up there to give you a show and to connect, I think that's what it really comes down to. Your character, your heart has to be in it. I think that's why people react so much." 🌸

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Louise T. Guinther, longtime senior editor at Opera News magazine, is an arts writer based in New York.





*Roméo in Gounod's Roméo et Juliette in 2019. / CORY WEAVER*

# Artist Profiles

\*\* American Debut \* San Francisco Opera Debut † Role Debut ‡ Current Adler Fellow + Merola Opera Program Graduate ◊ Merola and Adler Fellowship Graduate



## RAMÓN TEBAR \*

(Valencia, Spain)

### Conductor

### Recent and

### Upcoming: Don

*Pasquale* (Hamburg State Opera, Vienna

State Opera); *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (Lorraine Opera); *Madame Butterfly* (Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Florida Grand Opera, Vienna); *Saverio Mercadante's Francesca da Rimini* (Frankfurt Opera); *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* (Buenos Aires' Teatro Colón); Mahler's Fourth Symphony (Vienna); *Turandot* (Vienna); *Carmen* (Cincinnati Opera, Savonlinna Opera); *La Cenerentola* (Royal Swedish Opera); *Tosca* (Gothenburg Opera); *La Bohème* (Vienna, Florida); *Aida* (Opera Naples); Haydn's *L'Isola Disabitata* (Opera Naples); *Otello* (Pamplona's Baluarte); *Roméo et Juliette* (Cincinnati Opera); *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu); Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Florida); engagements with Cincinnati Symphony, Jyväskylä Sinfonia, Aarhus Symphony, Norrlandsoperan, Calgary Philharmonic, Copenhagen Philharmonic, Szczecin Philharmonic, Münchner Rundfunkorchester Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of Opera Naples (Florida) Artistic Director of Spain's Arantzazu Festival



## SLÁVKA

## ZÁMEČNÍKOVÁ \*\* †

Soprano

(Vienna, Austria)

### Adina

### Recent and

### Upcoming: Donna

Anna in *Don Giovanni* (Vienna State Opera, Berlin State Opera); Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Vienna); Micaëla in

*Carmen* (Vienna); Nannetta in *Falstaff* (Vienna, Stuttgart Opera); Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* (Vienna); Servilia in *La Clemenza di Tito* (Vienna); title role of *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (Vienna, Berlin); Musetta in *La Bohème* (Paris Opera); Norina in *Don Pasquale* (Vienna); Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Wiesbaden); Dircé in *Medée* (Berlin); Sophie in *Werther* (Prague National Theatre); First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* (Berlin); Miss Jessel in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* (Berlin); Falke in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Berlin); Ilia in *Idomeneo* (Wiesbaden)



## PENE PATI ◊

Tenor

(Apia, Samoa)

### Nemorino

### San Francisco Opera

**Highlights:** The Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*;

*Roméo in Roméo et Juliette*; *Opera Ball: The Centennial Celebration*; *In Song: Pene Pati*

**Recent and Upcoming:** Percy in *Anna Bolena* (Bordeaux Opera, Vienna State Opera); Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Paris Opera); Romeo in *Roméo et Juliette* (Paris' Opéra Comique, Bordeaux); Alfredo in *La Traviata* (Deutsche Oper Berlin, Dutch National Opera, Bolshoi Theatre); Chevalier des Grieux in *Manon* (Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, Hamburg State Opera); Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Naples' Teatro San Carlo); The Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* (Rouen Opera, Naples, Berlin State Opera); Aménophis in Rossini's *Moïse et Pharaon* (Aix-en-Provence); Rodolfo in *La Bohème* (Paris' Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Canadian Opera Company); Fernand in *La Favorite* (Bordeaux); title role of *La Damnation de Faust* (Monte-Carlo Opera, City of Birmingham

Symphony Orchestra); Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda* (Paris Opera); Cassio in *Otello* (Cleveland Orchestra); Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (Tonkünstler Orchester, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo); Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France); *Thaïs* (Orchestre National de France); gala concert (Prague Philharmonic at Rudolfinum); *Madame Butterfly* (Birmingham)

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship: 2016, 2017

Merola Opera Program: 2013

Facebook: @PenePatiTenor

Instagram: @pene.pati.tenor



## JONAH HOSKINS \*

Tenor

(Saratoga Springs, Utah)

### Nemorino

### Recent and

### Upcoming: Arnold in

*William Tell* (St. Gallen Theater); Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* (Paris' Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Bordeaux Opera); Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Santa Fe Opera); *Carmina Burana* (St. Gallen); Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Santa Fe); Dean of Faculty in *Cendrillon* (Metropolitan Opera); Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Pensacola Opera); Chevalier Belfiore in Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims* (Semperoper Dresden); Sailor in *Tristan und Isolde* (Santa Fe); Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* (Bard Orchestra at Fisher Center); recital (Kennedy Center Vocal Arts DC series) Ensemble member of St. Gallen Theater (Switzerland) Winner of Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions 2020

ARTIST PROFILES CONTINUED



**DAVID BIZIC \***  
Baritone  
(Bordeaux, France)  
**Sergeant Belcore**  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Marcello in *La Bohème* (Japan,

Irish National Opera, Metropolitan Opera); Escamillo in *Carmen* (Toulon Opera, Dijon Opera, Macerata Festival, Tel Aviv); César Franck's *Les Béatitudes* (Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège); Sharpless in *Madame Butterfly* (Metropolitan Opera, Hallé Orchestra in Manchester); Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* (Dijon); Sergeant Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Toulon); Ashton in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Toulon); title role of *Eugene Onegin* (Reims Opera, Metz); Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut* (Barcelona's Gran Theatre del Liceu)



**RENATO GIROLAMI \***  
Baritone  
(Amelia, Italy)  
**Dulcamara**  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Dulcamara in *L'Elisir*

*d'Amore* (Glyndebourne Festival); Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia* (Zurich Opera); Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola* (Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Madrid); *Tosca* (Paris Opera); *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Paris, Berlin State Opera)



**ARIANNA RODRIGUEZ J+**  
Soprano  
(Fairfax, Virginia)  
**Giannetta**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** Voice of

Unborn Child and Servant in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*; Musetta in *Bohème Out of the Box*

**Recent and Upcoming:** Musetta in *La Bohème* (Opera North); Leonard

Bernstein's *MASS* (Peabody Opera Theatre)  
San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program: 2023  
Merola Opera Program: 2022



**RANDY LEE \***  
(Berkeley, California)  
**The Mate**  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Mr. Wormwood in *Mathilda* (Palo Alto

Players); Chorus in *Nabucco* (West Bay Opera); Minli in *Baked! The Musical* (FaultLine Theater); Toad in *A Year with Frog and Toad* (Bay Area Children's Theater); Thomas (voiceover) and Blood Brother in *The Truer History of the Chan Family* (Intersection for the Arts); Yoon's Dad in *Land's End* (Cinematic Arts and Production); Dad in *Radish Soup* (PUC Films)



**DANIEL SLATER**  
(London, England)  
**Director**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** *Lohengrin*; *The Cunning Little Vixen*  
**Recent and Upcoming:**

*Orfeo ed Euridice/Dido and Aeneas* (Grange Festival); *Tamerlano* (Grange Festival); Handel's *Belshazzar* (Grange Festival); *Peter Grimes* (Opera Queensland, Brisbane Festival); *Die Zauberflöte* (Yekaterinburg Opera); *Tannhäuser* (Estonian National Opera); *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Pittsburgh Opera)



**TIM CLAYDON \***  
(Hitchin, England)  
**Associate Director/Choreographer**  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Choreographer of

*Turandot* (Geneva, Tokyo); *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Oslo, Copenhagen); Alberto Franchetti's *Asrael* (Bonn); *Effigies of Wickedness* (London's The Gate); Tarik O'Regan's *The Phoenix* (Houston Grand Opera); *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Pittsburgh Opera); *Orfeo ed Euridice/Dido and Aeneas* (Grange Festival); *Manon Lescaut* (Opera Holland Park); *Falstaff* (Garsington Opera); *Gianni Schicchi* (Opera North); Bohuslav Martinů's *The Greek Passion* (Opera North); Britten's *Albert Herring* (Opera North)  
Director of *In Search of Youkali* (set to songs by Kurt Weill)  
@tim\_claydon



**ROBERT INNES HOPKINS**  
(London, England)  
**Production Designer**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** Production Designer

of *La Traviata*, *Tosca*, *Lohengrin*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*; Set Designer of *L'Italiana in Algeri*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Teatro Comunale di Bologna); *1923* (Istanbul's Zorlu Performing Arts); *Orfeo ed Euridice/Dido and Aeneas* (Grange Festival); *All's Well That Ends Well* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Tamerlano* (Grange Festival); *Die Fledermaus* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis); Wagner's *Ring* cycle (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *War and Peace* (Welsh National Opera); *L'Italiana in Algeri* (Santa Fe Opera); Handel's *Belshazzar* (Grange Festival); *Casino Royale* (Secret Cinema London and Shanghai); *Solar* (Linz Klangwolke, Austria)

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## ARTIST PROFILES CONTINUED

### SIMON MILLS

**Lighting Designer**

**San Francisco Opera Highlights:**

*Lohengrin; The Cunning Little Vixen*



### 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; Madame 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*

**Recent and Upcoming:** *The Magic Flute;*

*Kaija Saariaho, Sofi Oksanen, and Aleksis Barrière's Innocence*

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:** John

Adams' *Antony and*

*Cleopatra; Carmen;*

*Tosca; the Ring cycle; Pagliacci;*

*Rigoletto; Romeo and Juliet; Billy Budd*

**Recent and Upcoming:** *Romeo and*

*Juliet (Opera San José); POTUS (Berkeley*

*Rep); Hamlet (Marin Shakes); Twelfth*

*Night (Marin Shakes); Who's Afraid of*

*Virginia Woolf? (Oakland Theater*

*Project); King Lear (Santa Cruz*

*Shakespeare); The Taming of the Shrew*

*(Santa Cruz Shakespeare)*

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# In Memoriam

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



RON SCHERL

## **James Bowman, countertenor**

An Oxford graduate and a Westminster Abbey chorister, Bowman first attracted attention with Benjamin Britten's English Opera Group in 1967, making his stage debut as Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Vel-

vety timbre and admirable flexibility were expected from the still-relatively new countertenor voice type at the time, but the sheer amplitude of Bowman's voice was astonishing—indeed, unique. In addition, his imposing height enhanced his characterization with all the necessary regality. Among his other early successes was playing the endearing shepherd Endimione in Cavalli's *La Calisto* at Glyndebourne, where his scenes with Janet Baker's Diana were gloriously sung. As Bowman continued to appear with major companies in America (San Francisco Opera as Oberon in 1971, Tolomeo in *Giulio Cesare* in 1982) and in Europe, he repeatedly filled sizeable theaters as easily as more "standard" voice types. He made a significant impact even when appearing with the great Marilyn Horne, his colleague in the United States premiere of Vivaldi's *Orlando Furioso* (Dallas, 1980). Bowman's performances made clear that roles previously assigned to female mezzos and contraltos could be assigned to him and the other countertenors who would eventually follow him. A pillar of the early music scene in Britain and internationally, he also appeared in the world premieres of Britten's *Death in Venice* (Aldeburgh) and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's *Taverner* (London). His more than 150 recordings cover the gamut of countertenor repertoire. Possessing a famous sense of humor and enormous charm, Bowman was also a cherished adviser for young singers. England's Vache Baroque Festival inaugurated a young artist program named for him in 2021.

## **Grace Bumbry, mezzo-soprano and soprano**

Having won attention as a teenager on "Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts," Bumbry became a prized pupil of Lotte Lehmann, who knew that European houses would provide Bumbry with the "big break" she needed. In 1960, at



HANK KRANZLER

only age 23, she made a sensational operatic debut in Paris as Amneris in *Aida*. The entire musical world would learn her name the following year when, as Venus in *Tannhäuser*, she became the first Black artist to perform at the Bayreuth Festival. Stupendously charismatic,

Bumbry won that famously demanding audience with her sumptuous, wide-ranging voice. Her historic triumph at Bayreuth moved the career into high gear, with Bumbry exuding an aura of a bold, glamorously jet-setting diva who sang exclusively star mezzo parts. One of them, *Carmen*, marked her debut in San Francisco in 1966. The following year, she was both Laura (*La Gioconda*) and Lady Macbeth, the latter also a huge success for her in Salzburg and at the Metropolitan Opera. Once she and an equally celebrated American mezzo, Shirley Verrett, began taking on soprano roles, they gave a series of exciting duo appearances, including a San Francisco Opera concert in 1984. Three years later, Bumbry made her final appearance here, starring as Abigaille (*Nabucco*). A favorite in virtually every other prestigious theater, Bumbry documented her artistry extensively, leaving particularly memorable recordings of two signature roles, Verdi's Eboli in *Don Carlo* and Amneris.



ROBERT CAHEN

## **Soňa Červená, mezzo-soprano**

Červená began her distinguished stage career in her native Prague before moving on to the Berlin State Opera. She was a resident lyric mezzo there in 1962, when she was able to escape from East to West Berlin.

That same year she launched a wonderfully varied, two-decade association with San Francisco Opera. Her first season saw her debuting as *Carmen* (mainstage and on tour to Los Angeles) and also singing Azucena in *Il Trovatore* (Los Angeles, San Diego), but it soon became evident that her considerable gifts could leave a greater

mark in important supporting roles. She sang 25 of them here, concluding her tenure during the 1980–81 Season as Flora Bervoix. Very much a chameleon vocally and physically, Červená could transform herself into the sophisticated actress Clairon in *Capriccio*, the imperious Herodias in *Salome*, and the tragic Countess Geschwitz in *Lulu*, but she was just as adept playing more ordinary women, whether Marthe in *Faust*, the Hostess of the Inn in *Boris Godunov*, or Grandmother Buryjovka in *Jenůfa*. Her repertoire of more than 100 roles brought her to the Wexford Festival (where she was reportedly unforgettable as the vicious Kabanicha in *Kát'a Kabanová*). She had a close relationship with Oper Frankfurt, while also appearing at the Bayreuth, Glyndebourne, and Edinburgh festivals, as well as the major companies of Milan, Amsterdam, and Paris. Her later years included appearances as an actress (Hamburg, Prague). Červená was still performing as recently as 2022, in her mid-nineties. In a Czech song (accessible on YouTube), she sings exclusively in chest voice but with great charm and indomitable spirit.



MARTY SOHL

**Graham Clark,  
tenor**

Clark's versatility was evident at San Francisco Opera, where he portrayed the dashing Albert Gregor in *The Makropulos Case* (1993), the riotously funny yet sinister Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* (2002), and the drunken

Piet the Pot in Ligeti's superhumanly difficult *Le Grand Macabre* (U.S. premiere, 2004). In performance, conquering superhuman challenges came easily to the English tenor. However exacting the role, he could illuminate it with a brightly penetrating voice and crystalline projection of the text. A former sports teacher, Clark was also a phenomenally skilled physical actor. He made his international reputation in Wagner, particularly at the Bayreuth Festival, where he sang six roles in 16 seasons. His matchlessly venomous Mime in *Siegfried* was also heard in 22 other major houses. He triumphed repeatedly as the Captain (*Wozzeck*), and he proved equally memorable as the venomous Bégearss in the world premiere of John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*. In London, Clark earned huge popularity at both London's Royal Opera House and English National Opera. After initially singing a good deal of lyric tenor heroes at ENO, he concluded that his voice lacked "red wine and sunshine" and began con-

centrating on character parts. In addition to six major roles at the Metropolitan Opera, Clark was featured at Milan's Teatro alla Scala, the Opéra National de Paris, and the major houses of Germany, Spain, Belgium, and Israel. When Clark's passing was announced, Royal Opera House Music Director Antonio Pappano hailed him as "a mesmerising [*sic*] stage presence and gifted with a natural exuberance that kept everyone around him positive and always laughing. A star in every way."



MARTY SOHL

**Robert Hale,  
bass-baritone**

A native Texan, Hale learned his trade at New York City Opera, where he sang leading bass roles for a decade, beginning in 1967. As Don Giovanni, as well as in bel canto repertoire, Hale rapidly established himself as

an artist of superb vocal, musical, and interpretive resources. Beginning in Wuppertal, Germany, where he sang his first Dutchman in 1978, he began taking on the *Heldenbariton* parts that would bring him great acclaim internationally. Hale was closely identified with both Wotan (San Francisco Opera debut, 1989 *Ring* cycle) and the Dutchman (Metropolitan Opera debut, 1990). In addition to a lengthy association with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, he starred in the major houses of Berlin, London, Vienna, Barcelona, Moscow, and Sydney, among many others. He continued to sing Italian and French roles, including Escamillo in *Carmen*, which marked his return to San Francisco in 1991. Invariably an eloquent, fearless singing actor, he created in-depth physical characterizations. He proved deeply impressive as Duke Adorno in Nikolaus Lehnhoff's definitive 2005 Salzburg Festival of Schreker's rarely heard melodrama *Die Gezeichneten*, one of disappointingly few Hale portrayals on commercial DVD. Fortunately, he can be heard on disc as Wotan in the *Ring*, the Dutchman in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and Jochanaan in *Salome*. Hale's musicianship and professionalism earned the respect of some of the most distinguished conductors of our time, including Christoph von Dohnányi, Wolfgang Sawallisch, James Levine, John Eliot Gardiner, and Giuseppe Sinopoli. He was a superb colleague, and the aura he communicated offstage was that of a true gentleman.



KEN HOWARD

**Berit Lindholm,  
soprano**

Although Swedish soprano Lindholm’s career included successes in Verdi and Puccini, she made her biggest impact in German repertoire. Her voluminous instrument boasted not only an exciting top but also a particularly warm, almost mezzo-like color in the lower octave. Enhancing Lindholm’s vocalism were notable dramatic gifts. The Stockholm native debuted in 1963 at her hometown’s Royal Opera and was already singing internationally by 1966, when London heard her as Strauss’ Chrysothemis in *Elektra*. In 1970, she was San Francisco Opera’s *Siegfried* Brünnhilde, and two years later she and her compatriot Birgit Nilsson shared Sieglinde and Brünnhilde in the Company’s *Ring* (Lindholm’s Metropolitan Opera debut in 1975 was as Brünnhilde, opposite Nilsson’s Sieglinde). Other Wagner successes included starring roles in Chicago and the major houses of Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Spain. Hugely admired at the Bayreuth Festival, Lindholm appeared there from 1967 to 1973. She remained loyal to Stockholm, where prominent among her many successes were role debuts as Isolde and *Elektra*. In addition to her Wagner heroines (which also included Senta, Venus, Elisabeth, Ortrud, and Kundry), she also triumphed repeatedly throughout Europe as Salome. She was one of few singers who performed all three principal female roles in *Elektra*. On disc Lindholm can be heard as Helmwige in the Solti *Ring* and, more prominently, as Cassandre in the first complete recording of Berlioz’s *Les Troyens*. Beloved for her captivatingly down-to-earth personality (she hoped to be remembered chiefly as “a good grandmother”), Lindholm was decorated as one of Sweden’s “Royal Court Singers” in 1976.



**John Priest,  
technical director**

In opera, it is often the artists seen and heard onstage or in the pit who earn the adjective “legendary.” That stature is more rarely attained by someone whose gifts are utilized entirely behind the scenes of an opera house. Such a figure was Priest, who made history at San Francisco Opera in 1966 when then General Director Kurt

Herbert Adler hired him as the Company’s first full-time technical director. Current General Director Matthew Shilvoek has noted that “John made an indelible impact in defining the Company we know and treasure today.” Priest earned deep respect for his all-encompassing knowledge of what a major opera company needs to function with optimum efficiency. San Francisco Opera has him to thank for the smooth execution of countless major developments in the Company’s technical operation, including moving the carpentry shop out of the Opera House to make room for offices; the acquisition of the Indiana Street Scene Shop, which consolidated support spaces that the Company had around the city; and the addition of the “Patch” at the back of the Opera House, adding critically needed backstage and office space at the same time that the San Francisco Symphony was moving to Davies Symphony Hall. Priest retired as technical director in 1993 but returned as Opera House Project Coordinator from 1994 to 1998, supervising the move out of the Opera House for seismic retrofit. Throughout his career, Priest was a constant source of inspiration and wise advice for opera professionals across America. His legacy to San Francisco Opera includes his son, Mark Kotschnig, a stagehand since 1996 and a full-time member in the Props department since 2002.



MARTY SOHL

**Gabriele Schnaut,  
mezzo-soprano and soprano**

In 1991, when Schnaut made her 1991 American debut at San Francisco Opera as Isolde, it was immediately evident that an important artist had entered the international Wagnerian ranks. The size and richness of Schnaut’s sound impressed as deeply as her authoritative musicianship and galvanizing presence. The German singer had arrived in San Francisco after 15 years of vital experience in major German houses. She began as a mezzo-soprano in 1976, working first in Stuttgart and then in Darmstadt. By 1985 she had moved into dramatic soprano parts, making her mark as Ortrud, Brünnhilde, and Isolde. Schnaut was a greatly admired figure in every leading German house, particularly those of Düsseldorf, Hamburg, and Munich. Her lengthy association with the Bayreuth Festival, which extended from 1977 to 2000, had much to do with sustaining her reputation as one of her generation’s most celebrated Wagnerians. Like Birgit Nilsson before her, Schnaut was also successful as *Elektra*



(Metropolitan Opera, Munich, other major houses), the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Metropolitan Opera, Vienna), and the title role of *Turandot*, the latter her only other role in San Francisco (1998) and one she also sang at Lyric Opera of Chicago and at the Salzburg Festival (DVD). In 2008, she moved back to dramatic mezzo-soprano parts, excelling as Kostelnička, Herodias, and Klytämnestra. In addition to Wagner, she can be heard on disc in much 20th-century opera. In contrast to her imperious onstage persona, Schnaut offstage was a vibrant, utterly irresistible human being, whose alluring speaking voice instantly brought everyone around her into her orbit.



IRA NOWINSKI

**Renata Scotto,**  
**soprano**

Renata Scotto was “an original”—truly an artist quite unlike any other. During her lengthy career she made her own rules, constantly reinventing herself in response to her own artistic interests. The luminous-voiced

young Scotto first gained notice as one of Italy's most beguiling, lyric-coloratura sopranos, appearing at Milan's Teatro alla Scala in 1953, when only 19 (as Walter in *La Wally*, opposite Renata Tebaldi and Mario Del Monaco). Four years later she skyrocketed to stardom replacing Maria Callas in *La Sonnambula* at the Edinburgh Festival. When Puccini roles introduced her to America (Mimì in Chicago in 1960, Cio-Cio-San at the Met in 1965), she illuminated the music by approaching it with a technique securely anchored in *bel canto*. Having debuted in San Francisco with her incomparable Cio-Cio-San (1974), her return engagements displayed exciting evidence of her gradual acquisition of heavier repertoire—the *Trovatore* Leonora, Adriana Lecouvreur, and Gioconda. A mezzo role, Massenet's Charlotte, marked her final San Francisco Opera appearance (1985). Scotto, who earned acclaim at virtually every leading American and European house, enjoyed a 22-year association with the Metropolitan Opera, where her many PBS telecasts significantly raised the prevailing standard of operatic acting on television. The Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Vienna, and London all witnessed Scotto's miraculous development over time from a *leggero* singer to an interpreter of lyric, then spinto and dramatic-coloratura parts. She documented virtually all of her extensive repertoire, whether on LP, CD, or video. In later years, this electrifying, acutely intel-

ligent, passionately committed artist made two new careers, working internationally as both a highly successful director and a sought-after vocal coach.



RON SCHERL

**Virginia Zeani,**  
**soprano**

In 1957 Romanian soprano Virginia Zeani made operatic history, creating the central role of Blanche de la Force in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* at Milan's Teatro alla Scala. Twenty-five years later she returned to the

Poulenc work as Mother Marie, making her San Francisco Opera debut in that formidable role. One of the most exquisitely beautiful, vocally gifted sopranos of her time, and blessed with exceptional musical curiosity, Zeani sang coloratura, lyric, and spinto parts during her 34 years onstage. Having studied in Bucharest and Milan, Zeani (*née* Zehan) achieved instant stardom in 1948, making her last-minute operatic debut at age 22 singing *La Traviata* in Bologna. Violetta subsequently became her signature role in 648 performances, heard at the Met, London, Vienna, Paris, and the Bolshoi, among many other major theaters worldwide. Zeani's 69 roles extended from Handel's Cleopatra to the gamut of 19th-century heroines (whether in *bel canto*, Verdi, French repertoire, and even Wagner) and numerous 20th-century parts, several of which were written especially for Zeani. She was celebrated in all the major Italian houses and was a particular favorite at Rome's Teatro dell'Opera where she starred in resurrections of Rossini's *Otello* and Verdi's *Alzira*. Sadly neglected by recording companies, Zeani possessed a temperament that didn't lend itself to fighting for professional opportunities. She enjoyed her status as a “connoisseur's singer,” as well as her happy marriage to bass Nicola Rossi-Lemeni. A passionate, inordinately generous, immeasurably warm-hearted woman, Zeani was greatly loved during more than two decades on the voice faculty of Indiana University. ❁

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*Roger Pines is a contributing writer to Opera News, Opera (U.K.), programs of opera companies internationally, and major recording labels. A faculty member of Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music, he has also been a panelist on the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts' "Opera Quiz" every season since 2006.*

**1992**

**Sanford Sylvan** portrayed Leon Klinghoffer in *The Death of Klinghoffer*, opera by **John Adams** with libretto by **Alice Goodman**.

PHOTO: MARTY SOHL



## Witnesses to History

This season, three of San Francisco Opera's mainstage productions are new works co-commissioned by the Company from composers Mason Bates, Rhiannon Giddens, Michael Abels, Kaija Saariaho, and librettists Mark Campbell, Giddens, Sofi Oksanen, and Aleksis Barrière. This unprecedented proportion of new works to classics to inaugurate the Company's second century is both unprecedented in San Francisco Opera history and supports its long-standing commitment to expanding the operatic repertoire and telling new stories by the leading artists of our time.

Of San Francisco Opera's, to date, 30 commissions and co-commissions, these 12 works inspired by real people—witnesses to history such as Omar ibn Said or Steve Jobs—have transformed actual events into reverberant, communal experiences in ways that only opera makes possible.

**2005**

**Gerald Finley** as J. Robert Oppenheimer in *Doctor Atomic*, opera by **John Adams** with libretto by **Peter Sellars**.

PHOTO: TERRENCE MCCARTHY

**1996**

**Robert Orth** as Harvey Milk, **Juliana Gondek** as Dianne Feinstein, and **Gidon Saks** as Mayor George Moscone in *Harvey Milk*, opera by **Stewart Wallace** with libretto by **Michael Korie**.

PHOTO: RON SCHERL



**2000**

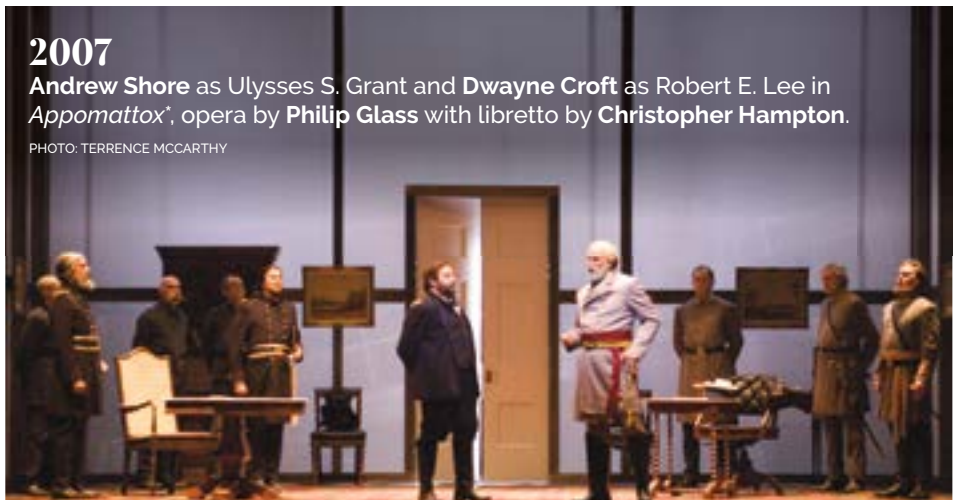
**Frederic von Stade** as Mrs. Patrick de Rocher and **Susan Graham** as Sister Helen Prejean in *Dead Man Walking*, opera by **Jake Heggie** with libretto by **Terrence McNally**.

PHOTO: KEN FRIEDMAN

**2007**

**Andrew Shore** as Ulysses S. Grant and **Dwayne Croft** as Robert E. Lee in *Appomattox*, opera by **Philip Glass** with libretto by **Christopher Hampton**.

PHOTO: TERRENCE MCCARTHY



**2011**

**Thomas Hampson** as Rick Rescorla in *Heart of a Soldier*, opera by **Christopher Theofanidis** with libretto by **Donna Di Novelli**. PHOTO: CORY WEAVER



**2022**

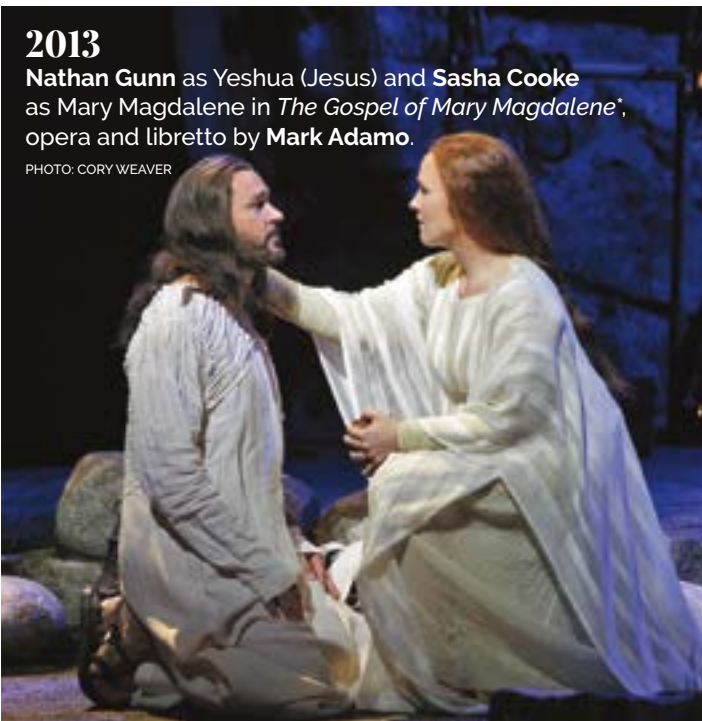
**Amina Edris** and **Gerald Finley** as the title roles in *Antony and Cleopatra*, opera by **John Adams**.

PHOTO: CORY WEAVER

**2013**

**Nathan Gunn** as Yeshua (Jesus) and **Sasha Cooke** as Mary Magdalene in *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, opera and libretto by **Mark Adamo**.

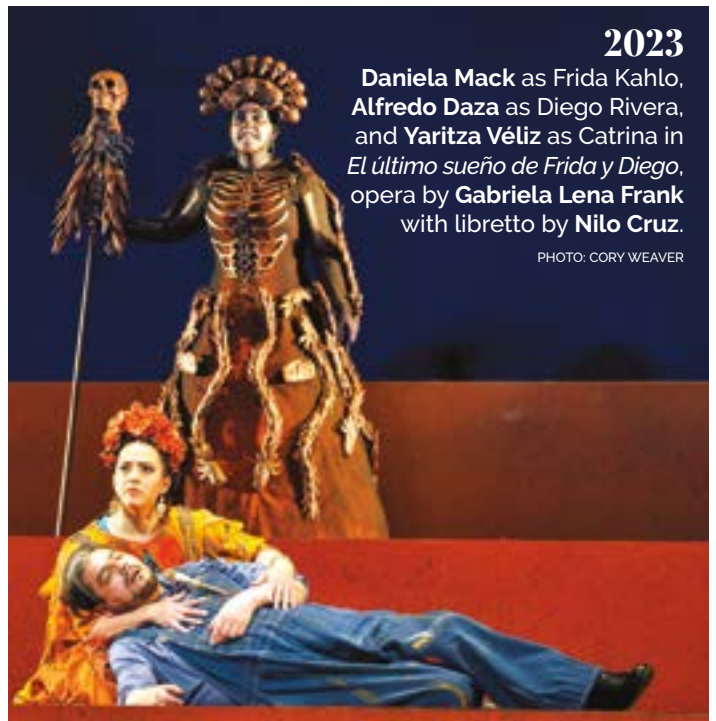
PHOTO: CORY WEAVER



**2023**

**Daniela Mack** as Frida Kahlo, **Alfredo Daza** as Diego Rivera, and **Yaritza Véliz** as Catrina in *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*, opera by **Gabriela Lena Frank** with libretto by **Nilo Cruz**.

PHOTO: CORY WEAVER



**2017**

**J'Nai Bridges** as Josefa Segovia and **Julia Bullock** as Dame Shirley in *Girls of the Golden West*, opera by **John Adams** with libretto by **Peter Sellars**.

PHOTO: STEFAN COHEN



**2023**

**John Moore** as Steve Jobs in *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, opera by **Mason Bates** with libretto by **Mark Campbell**.

PHOTO: CORY WEAVER

**2023**

**Jamez McCorkle** as Omar ibn Said in *Omar*, opera by **Rhiannon Giddens** and **Michael Abels** with libretto by **Rhiannon Giddens**.

PHOTO: CORY WEAVER/LA OPERA



# Your Guide to San Francisco Opera at the War Memorial Opera House

WELCOME! WE'RE SO PLEASED YOU'RE HERE.

**CONNECT TO SAN FRANCISCO OPERA** after the performance! Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok @sfopera for your insider's look!



## COAT CHECK

Check your coat at the north and south ends of the Main Lobby. For the safety and comfort of our audience, large bags are strongly discouraged and are subject to search.

## DINING

**CAFES:** Enjoy a variety of sandwiches, snacks, and refreshments  
**Café Express (Lower Level, Open 2 hours before curtain)**  
**Dress Circle Lounge (Level 3, South, Open 1 hour before curtain)**

**RESTAURANTS:** Dine pre-show or reserve a table for intermission.  
**Prelude at The Opera House • Lower Lounge**  
Prelude at the Opera House (formerly known as The Café at the Opera) offers a changing seasonal buffet (including brunch) and elevated à la carte dishes.

**North Box Restaurant and Bar • North Mezzanine Level**  
Overlooking the magnificent main lobby, North Box Restaurant offers California cuisine with global influences and is an ideal destination for pre-performance and intermission dining.

*Restaurants are open two hours prior to performances. Reservations are strongly recommended. Reserve a table online at [sfopera.com/dine](https://sfopera.com/dine) or email [operahousepreorder@ggcatery.com](mailto:operahousepreorder@ggcatery.com), or call (415) 861-8150 (email preferred over phone).*

## PRE-ORDER!

Avoid lines during intermission by pre-ordering beverages and snacks with a food and beverage server upon your arrival at any point of service.

## SAN FRANCISCO OPERA SHOP

Take home a memento! Located in the South Mezzanine lobby, the Opera Shop sells branded merchandise, jewelry, books, and gift items. The Shop is open 90 minutes before performances, at intermissions, and afterward. All proceeds benefit San Francisco Opera.

## ALL ARE WELCOME. HELP US MAKE SURE EVERYONE HAS A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE!

- Turn off all electronic devices during the performance, including digital watches and cell phones. We ask this out of respect for the artists and for everyone in the theater enjoying a live, in-the-moment experience.
- Take photos before or after the performance, during intermission, or during the bows, and leave cameras and recording devices off during performances.
- Enjoy food and drinks, purchased onsite pre-show and during intermission, before entering the theater. You may bring drinks into the theater, but please be mindful of your fellow patrons.
- As a courtesy to those who may have fragrance allergies, please avoid wearing perfume or cologne.
- Get to know and enjoy this wonderful community of opera lovers. Say hello to one another pre-show, at intermission, or leaving the theater.

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

## FIRST AID STATION

Our First Aid Station is located on the South Lower Level. In case of emergency, please ask the nearest usher to assist you.

## ACCESSIBILITY

San Francisco Opera is committed to providing easy access for all of our patrons. If you need assistance for a future performance, please contact the Opera Box Office prior to your visit so that we can ensure your comfort.

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

**LARGE-PRINT CAST SHEETS AND SYNOPSES**

Visit the North Lobby coat check for large-print versions.

**LISTENING DEVICES**

Assistive listening devices are available at the North Lobby coat check. ID deposit required.

**LIVE TITLES: TEXT-TO-VOICE SUPERTITLES**

Headsets that provide a spoken version of the supertitles are available at the North Lobby coat check.

**OPERA GLASSES**

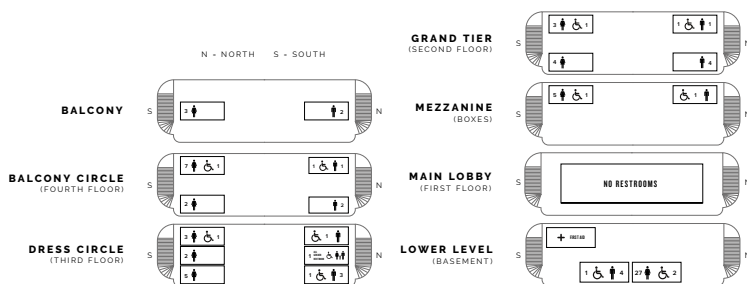
See the action up close and rent a pair of opera glasses for \$5 at the North Lobby coat check. ID deposit is requested. Credit card only.

**LOST AND FOUND**

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

**RESTROOMS**

Restrooms are located on all levels of the Opera House except on the Orchestra Level (Main Lobby).



**IMPROVING YOUR SAFETY**

## Meet Your Civic Center Ambassadors!

As you leave the theater, be on the lookout for friendly community ambassadors in orange vests or coats along Grove Street. These ambassadors are there to assist you and escort you to and from the Opera House on performance days and evenings from 6:30-11:30pm.



**RIDESHARE**

Direct your rideshare service to pick up and drop off using the white loading zone at 455 Franklin Street (located behind the Opera House).

**TAXI SERVICE**

Patrons desiring a taxi after a performance should come to the Grove Street Taxi Ramp located on the south side of the Opera House. Taxis cannot be guaranteed as service is based on availability of licensed taxis. Please note the Taxi Ramp is not staffed.

**SAN FRANCISCO WAR MEMORIAL AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**  
**WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE**

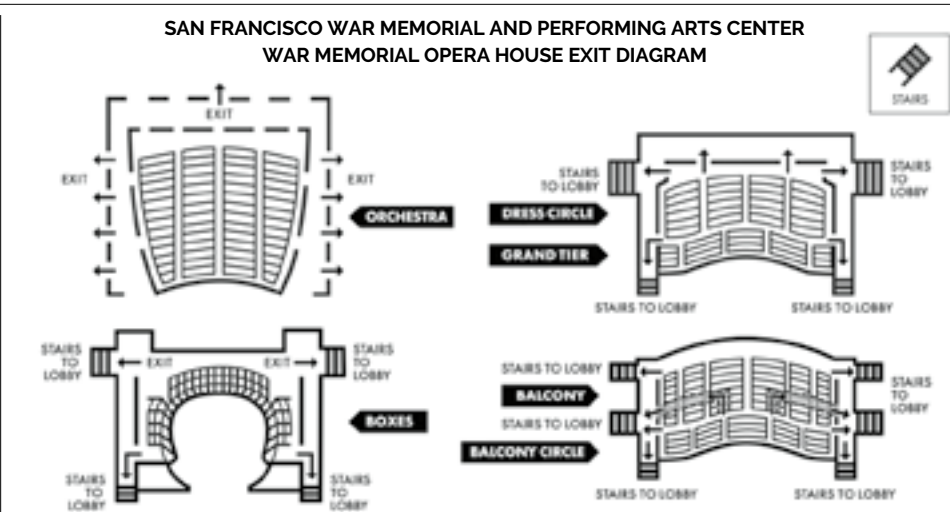
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**PATRONS, ATTENTION PLEASE! FIRE NOTICE:** Please note the nearest exit. In an emergency, follow any lighted exit sign to the street. **WALK**, do not run, to the nearest exit. Disabled patrons, proceed to nearest elevator lobby and await assistance.

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.

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*Assistant Head of Properties*

## REHEARSAL

**Marin Venturi**,

*Rehearsal Department Director\**

**Savannah Criswell**, *Rehearsal Administrator*

**Jacob Zdunich**, *Rehearsal Coordinator: Personnel*

**Liz R. Ray**, *Rehearsal Coordinator: Administration*

**Heather Kelly-Laws**, *Rehearsal Assistant*

## SCENE SHOP

**John Del Bono**, *Scene Shop Foreperson*

**Steve McNally**, *Scenic Artist in Charge*

## STAGING STAFF

**Darin Burnett**,

*Production Stage Manager\**

**Darin Burnett, Jennifer Harber**,

**Jayne O'Hara, Thea Railey**,

*Stage Managers*

**Ian Andrew Askew, Jose Maria Condemi**,

**E. Reed Fisher, Jennifer Harber**,

**Dan Wallace Miller**,

**Roy Rallo, Morgan Robinson**,

*Assistant Stage Directors*

**Collette Berg, Jonathan S. Campbell**,

**Megan Coutts, Jayme O'Hara**,

**Thea Railey, Anna Reetz**,

*Assistant Stage Managers*

**Colm Seery**, *Dance Master*

## TECHNICAL DIRECTION

**Erik Walstad**, *Technical and Safety Director\**

**Ryan O'Steen**, *Production Manager\**

**Lawren Gregory**, *Assistant Technical Director*

**Scott Cavallo**, *Assistant Technical Director*

## WARDROBE

**Tony Gorzycki**, *Head of Wardrobe*

**Cynthia Fusco, Carol Horaitis**,

**Robert Horek, David McKain**,

*Wardrobe Assistants*

## WIG, HAIR, & MAKEUP

**Jeanna Parham**,

*Department Head of Wigs, Hair, and Makeup*

**Christina Martin**,

*Assistant Department Head of*

*Wigs, Hair, and Makeup*

---

Dr. Myron Marx, *Company Medical Adviser*

Seyfarth Shaw LLP, *Counsel*

Armanino LLP, *Independent Public Accountants*

*UCSF doctors:*

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Dr. Mark Almond,

Dr. Robert Harrison,

Dr. Sanziana Roman,

Dr. Clark Rosen

Asero Insurance Services, *Insurance Brokers*

Cory Weaver, *Official Photographer*

Yamaha is the Official Piano of San Francisco Opera

Pianos supplied by Piedmont Piano

# 2023-24 Artists

## PRINCIPAL ARTISTS

Julie Adams \*^  
 Hadleigh Adams \*^  
 Roberto Alagna \*  
 Andrea Alderman  
 Angela Arnold  
 Javier Arrey  
 Zhengyi Bai \*^  
 Barry Banks  
 Joseph Barron  
 C. Michael Belle  
 Gabrielle Beteag \*^  
 David Bizic \*  
 Angel Blue  
 Aleksey Bogdanov \*^  
 Aleta Braxton \*  
 Bille Bruley \*  
 William Lee Bryan  
 Cheryl Cain  
 Sarah Cambridge \*^  
 Victor Cardamone \*^  
 Maire Therese Carmack \*  
 Arturo Chacón-Cruz \*^  
 Sarah Coit  
 Sasha Cooke  
 Christopher Craig \*  
 Johanne Daniel  
 Claire de Sevigne \*  
 Camilo Delgado Diaz \*\*  
 Ashley Dixon \*^  
 Ruxandra Donose  
 Melissa Dufort \*  
 Marina Dumont \*\*  
 Jessica-Elisabeth \*  
 John Fluker \*  
 Julie Fuchs \*  
 John Fulton  
 Christina Gansch  
 Norman Garrett \*  
 Margaret Genovese  
 Rod Gilfry  
 Kevin Gino  
 Renato Girolami \*  
 Edward Graves \*^  
 Calvin Griffin \*  
 Jongwon Han †  
 Stella Hannock  
 Earl Hazell  
 Julie Hega \*\*  
 Jonah Hoskins \*  
 Vilma Jää \*\*  
 Christopher Jackson  
 Ernest C. Jackson, Jr. \*

Joanna Lynn-Jacobs \*  
 Michael Jankosky  
 Silvie Jensen  
 James Johnson ~  
 Sydnee Turrentine-Johnson \*  
 Wilford Kelly \*  
 Hyona Kim  
 Simon Kluth \*\*  
 Bojan Knežević  
 Laura Krumm \*^  
 Aleksandra Kurzak  
 Judit Kutasi \*\*  
 Joseph Lattanzi \*^  
 Adam Lau \*^  
 Randy Lee  
 Thomas Lehman \*  
 Christine Lyons  
 Daniela Mack \*^  
 Malcolm Mackenzie  
 Jamez McCorkle \*  
 Jermaine McGhee \*\*  
 Liesl McPherrin  
 Courtney Miller  
 John Moore \*  
 Thalia Moore \*  
 Beate Mordal \*\*  
 Angela Moser  
 Brian Mulligan  
 Miles Mykkanen \*  
 Daniel Okulitch \*^  
 Simon O'Neill \*^  
 William O'Neill  
 Kenneth Overton  
 Andrew Thomas Pardini  
 Pene Pati \*^  
 Amitai Pati \*^  
 George Petean \*  
 Chester Pidduck  
 Robert Pomakov  
 Laurel Cameron Porter  
 Nikola Printz \*^  
 Taylor Raven \*^  
 Brittany Renee \*  
 Arianna Rodriguez \*^  
 Mikayla Sager \*^  
 Moisés Salazar \*^  
 Ekaterina Semenchuk  
 Lucy Shelton \*  
 Alek Shrader \*^  
 Kristinn Sigmundsson  
 Anna Simińska \*  
 Olivia Smith \*^  
 Whitney Steele

Alexander Taite  
 Nicholas Tamagna \*  
 Rehanna Thelwell \*  
 Jere Torkelsen  
 Lauri Vasar \*\*  
 Carlo Vistoli \*  
 Chloe Vaught \*  
 Wei Wu \*  
 Kyle van Schoonhoven \*^  
 Jesslyn Thomas  
 Kwangchul Youn \*  
 Slávka Zámečnicková \*\*

## CONDUCTORS

Michael Christie  
 John Kennedy \*  
 Eun Sun Kim  
 Clément Mao-Takacs \*  
 Christopher Moulds  
 Ramón Tebar \*

## PRODUCTION

Barrie Kosky and  
 Suzanne Andrade  
 Sir David McVicar  
 Simon Stone \*

## STAGE DIRECTORS

Christopher Alden  
 David Alden  
 Kevin Newbury  
 Roy Rallo  
 Peter Relton \*  
 Tobias Ribitzki \*  
 Kaneza Schaal \*  
 Daniel Slater

## CHOREOGRAPHERS

Kiara Benn \*  
 Maxine Braham \*  
 Timothy Claydon \*

## KEY:

\* San Francisco Opera Debut  
 \*\* U.S. Debut  
 \* Former Adler Fellow  
 † Current Adler Fellow  
 ^ Former Merola Opera Program participant  
 ~ Solo Dancer  
 Cover Artist

# Chorus

John Keene, Chorus Director  
 Fabrizio Corona, Associate Chorus Master

## REGULAR CHORUS

Nadima Avakian	Bojan Knežević *
Buffy Baggott	Elisabeth Rom Lucio
Kathleen Bayler	Liesl McPherrin *
C. Michael Belle	Angela Eden Moser *
William Lee Bryan *	Sally Mouzon
Cheryl Cain	Sarah Nadreau
Janet Campbell	Erin Neff
Alan Cochran	William O'Neill *
Sara Colburn t	Andrew Thomas Pardini *
Edith Dowd	Rachelle Perry
Anders Fröhlich	Phillip Pickens
John Fulton *	William Pickersgill
Kevin Gino *	Chester Pidduck *
Stella Hannock *	Laurel Cameron Porter
Daniel Harper	Valery Portnov
Christopher Jackson *	Carole Schaffer t
Michael Jankosky *	Jonathan Smucker
Silvie Jensen *	Whitney Steele *
Wilford Kelly *	Jesslyn Thomas *
Claire Kelm	Jere Torkelsen *
Crystal Kim *	Andrew Truett

t Chorus member on leave of absence  
 \* Solo Role

## EXTRA CHORUS

Andrea Alderman	Joanna Lynn-Jacobs *
Angela Arnold	Ilanthe Marini
Elizabeth Baker	Zachary Martin
Aleta Braxton *	Michael Mendelsohn
Jennifer Brody	Courtney Miller
Katie Carlson Cartwright	Thalia Moore *
Sara Colburn	Julia Mulholland
Christopher Craig *	Antonio Nagore
Johanne Daniel	Raiña Parks
Clare Demer	Alexander Perkins
Spencer Dodd	Aimée Puentes
Melissa Dufort *	Samuel Rabinowitz
Jessica-Elisabeth *	Leandra Ramm
John Fluker *	Clifton Romig
Margaret Genovese	Fernando Ruiz
Patrick J. Hagen	Chung-Wai Soong
Harlan Hays	Alexander Taite *
Earl Hazell *	Nicole Takesono
Glenn Healy	Taylor Thomas-Thompson
Matt Hidalgo	Patrick Tsoi-A-Sue
Joshua Hughes	Sydnee Turrentine-Johnson *
Ernest C. Jackson Jr. *	Nicolas Vasquez-Gerst
Jawan Jenkins	Chloe Vaught *
Celestí'anna Jordan	Igor Vieira
David Kekuewa	Nick Volkert
Michael Kuo	Miles Ward
Eric Levintow	Jack Wilkins
Benjamin Liupaogo	Jacque Wilson
Matthew Lovell	Daniel Yoder
Joachim Luis	

San Francisco Opera extends its gratitude and appreciation to the following labor organizations whose members, artists, and craftspeople make possible our performances.

American Federation of Musicians, Local 6  
 American Guild of Musical Artists, Inc.  
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 Employees, Local 16

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

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

United Scenic Artists Local Usa – 829, I.A.T.S.E.  
 Box Office and Front of House Employees Union,  
 Local B-18





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# Orchestra

Eun Sun Kim, *Music Director*

## FIRST VIOLIN

Kay Stern, *Concertmaster*  
Maya Cohon, *Associate Concertmaster* +  
Heidi Wilcox,  
*Assistant Concertmaster*  
Jennifer Cho  
Dawn Harms  
Mariya Borozina  
Naoko Nakajima  
Barbara Riccardi  
Dian Zhang  
Leonid Igudesman  
Jennifer Hsieh  
Asuka Annie Yano

## SECOND VIOLIN

Jeremy Preston, *Principal*  
Martha Simonds, *Associate Principal*  
Beni Shinohara, *Assistant Principal*  
Eva Karasik  
Leslie Ludena  
Ka-Yeon Lee  
Aya Kiyonaga  
Craig Reiss

## VIOLA

Carla Maria Rodrigues, *Principal*  
Joy Fellows, *Associate Principal* +  
Emily Liu, *Acting Assistant Principal* ^  
Patricia Heller  
Natalia Vershilova  
Elizabeth Prior ^  
Yi Zhou ^

## CELLO

Evan Kahn, *Principal*  
Thalia Moore,  
*Associate Principal*  
Peter Myers,  
*Assistant Principal*  
Nora Pirquet  
Emil Miland  
Jung-Hsuan Ko  
Ruth Lane

## BASS

Joseph Lescher, *Principal*  
Jonathan Lancelle,  
*Associate Principal*  
Shinji Eshima,  
*Acting Assistant Principal*  
Evan Hillis ^  
Zach Hislop ^

## FLUTE

Julie McKenzie, *Principal*  
Susan Kang ^  
Stephanie McNab

## PICCOLO

Stephanie McNab

## OBOE

Mingjia Liu, *Principal*  
Gabriel Young, *Associate Principal* +  
Liam Boisset ^  
Books Fisher ^  
Wentao Jiang ^

## ENGLISH HORN

Liam Boisset ^  
Wentao Jiang ^

## CLARINET

José González Granero, *Principal*  
Joanne Burke Eisler,  
*Assistant Principal* †  
Sean Krissman ^  
Junghwan Lee ^

## BASS CLARINET

Junghwan Lee ^

## BASSOON

Rufus Olivier, *Principal*  
Daniel MacNeill +  
Michael Severance †  
Shawn Jones ^

## CONTRABASSOON

Michael Severance †  
Shawn Jones ^

## FRENCH HORN

Kevin Rivard, *Principal*  
Keith Green  
Brian McCarty, *Associate Principal*  
Meredith Brown ^  
Phillip Palmore ^  
Caitlyn Smith-Franklin ^

## TRUMPET

Adam Luftman, *Principal*  
Scott Macomber ^  
John Pearson +

## TROMBONE

Michael Cox, *Acting Principal*  
Jeffrey Budin ^  
David Ridge

## BASS TROMBONE

David Ridge, *Principal*

## TUBA/CIMBASSO

Zachariah Spellman, *Principal*

## TIMPANI

John Burgardt, *Principal*

## PERCUSSION

Patricia Niemi, *Acting Principal*  
Victor Avdienko ^

## HARP

Annabelle Taubl ^

## LIBRARIAN

Carrie Weick  
Krisha Montmorency, *Assistant Librarian*

## ADDITIONAL MUSICIANS

Bryndon Hassman, *harpsichord*  
Yang Lin, *piano*

## ORCHESTRA MANAGER

Tracy Davis  
Kevin Myers,  
*Orchestra Operations Manager*

† = Leave of absence

+ = Principal for one or more  
Summer season operas

^ = Season Substitute

---

# Corps Dancers

Colm Seery, *Dance Master*

Alysia Chang ~  
Vincent Chavez  
Brett Conway ^  
Jamielyn Duggan ^  
Marquis Engle  
Blanche Hampton ^  
Zaria Jackson  
James Johnson  
Bryan Ketron t  
Luke Lazzaro  
Felipe Leon  
Rachel Speidel Little t  
Marlayna Elyse Locklear  
Damon Mahoney  
Coral Martin

Micah Moch  
Christopher Nachtrab ^^  
Jekyns Pelaez t  
Maxwell Simoes ~  
Chiharu Shibata ^^  
Marcos Vedovetto ~  
Jeffrey Ware  
Michael Wells

^ Tenured  
t Tenured Dancer  
on Leave of Absence  
~ Resident Corps  
\* Solo Role

---

# Supernumeraries

## *Omar Child Supernumeraries*

Jahla Love  
Remi Abidoye

## *Elixir of Love Child Supernumeraries*

Aidan Rhys Politza  
Brayden Christian

## *Elixir of Love Supernumeraries*

Doug Spradlin

# Backstage Personnel

## COSTUME SHOP

Jai Alltizer (23), *Costume Shop Manager*  
Galen Till (19),

*Senior Production Supervisor*

Lyre Alston, *Production Supervisor*  
Manuel Gutierrez (24),

*Production Coordinator*

Sally Thomas (24), *Master Tailor*  
Amy Ashton-Keller (30), *Master Draper*  
Barbara Ebel (15), *Senior Draper*  
Santiago Suanes (14), *Men's Draper*  
Nika Cassaro, *Draper*  
Paula Wheeler (32), *Senior Milliner*  
Amy Van Every (39), *Senior Dyer*  
Karen Lewis, *Assitant Dyer*  
Jersey McDermott (24),

*Senior Craftsperson/Shoe Specialist*  
Emma Lehman, Kristen Tracy (16),  
*Assistant Cutters*

Yui Takenouchi, Taylor Newell,  
Kaitlyn Patrick, *First Hand*  
Robyn Marsh, Victoria Mortimer,  
*Costume Assistants*

## COSTUME TECHNICIANS

Miriam Acosta (26), Karla Fix,  
Hoa Fong (25), Gillian Haratani (12),  
Haratini (12), Jaya Grace Goheen,  
Ashley Granbow, Katherine Griffith,  
Meg Horan, Amanda Mitchell,  
Sara Morimoto, Mikael Nohai,  
Sarah Ellen Smith, Charles Sullivan,  
Yesenia Villenasenor, Robert Whitehurst

## WARDROBE DEPARTMENT

### CORE CREW

Nicolas Chacon  
Linda Edwards (25)  
Edward Fonseca (12)  
Lorraine Lewis (11)  
Emma Mueller  
Rachell Nichols  
Phil Perry (26)  
Patrick Sanchez (14)  
Don Smith (27)  
Scott Stewart (23)  
Grisel Torres  
Kirsten Tucker (20)

### DRESSERS

Paula Barish  
Kathleen Blake (11)  
Ava Byrd  
Ash Cable  
Claudia Holaday (44)  
Ralph Hoy  
Michael Kruzich  
Jeffery Larsen  
Demetrius Martin  
Jennifer O'Neill (11)  
Fox Radosevich  
Mark Saladino

## WIG, HAIR, AND MAKEUP DEPARTMENT

### SENIOR WIG ARTISTS

Erin Hennessy (10)  
Maur Sela

### WIG ARTISTS

Tori Grayum  
Gloria Mueller  
Sharon Peng  
Lindsay Saier

### SHOW CALL FOREPERSONS

Consuelo Lopez-Robbins  
Christina Martin (11)  
Sharon Peng  
Tim Santry (32)

### PRINCIPAL WIG, HAIR, AND MAKEUP ARTISTS

Melanie Birch (36), Calli Carvajal,  
Sarah Coy, Maricela Garcia,  
Denise Gutierrez (40), Arina Izadi,  
Amber Lauder milk,  
Consuelo Lopez-Robbins,  
Toby Mayer (32), Lisa Patnoe (32),  
Sharon Peng, Maurisa Rondeau,  
Tim Santry (32)

### SHOW CALL WIG, HAIR, AND MAKEUP ARTISTS

Shana Astrachan,  
Vanessa Blanchard Lee,  
Kristen Campbell, Calli Carvajal,  
Sarah Coy, Tatyana Fateyeva,  
Marisela Garcia, Denise Gutierrez (40),  
Erin Hennessy (10), Arina Izadi,  
Amber Lauder milk,  
Consuelo Lopez-Robbins, Letzy Lugo,  
Christina Martin (11), Toby Mayer (32),  
Gloria Mueller, Naki Mugambi,  
Robert Mzarik (17), Leilani Norman,  
Lisa Patnoe (32), Sharon Peng,  
Jordan Plath, Maurisa Rondeau,  
Lindsay Saier, Maur Sela,  
Sophie Smith (9), Kimberly Virgen,  
Lisa Zomer (24)

### SCENE SHOP

Dennis Forry  
Christian Martinez  
Dylan Maxson  
Victor Sanchez (26)

### SCENIC ART DEPARTMENT

Lauren Abrams  
Jennifer Bennes

## CARPENTRY DEPARTMENT

Robert Avery  
Neil Biagio  
Dominic Casazza (20),  
*Assistant Key Flyperson*  
Gabriel Castellani (13),  
*Automation Key*  
Michael Chapman (11), *Key*  
Dennis Criswell  
Paul Delatorre (24), *Key*  
Tony Garcia  
Karla Hargrave  
Greg Harsha (24), *Key*  
Geoffrey R. Heron (17)  
Geoffrey W. Heron (29), *Key*  
Philip Heron, (21),  
*Automation and Rigging Foreperson*  
Ed Joe, *Warehouse Foreperson*  
Nick Kukielka  
Michael Martino  
Alex Meyer  
Harry Niedzwetzki (31)  
John O'Donnell (35), *Key Flyperson*  
Enrique Pronio  
Michael Ramirez  
Ty Russell,  
*Night Crew Foreperson*  
James Ryan  
Kenneth Ryan (41)  
Michael Ryan  
Eila Saarni  
Gregory Shaff (35), *Key*  
Harper Shipley  
Cyrus Sindicich  
Sean Walden (12)  
Randy Walsh (21), *Assistant Key*  
Collin Whitfield  
Sammy Wong

## PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Scott J. Barringer (23), *Key*  
Greta Calvo  
Christy Carter  
James Eldredge (19), *Shop Mechanic*  
Hilary Engelman  
Oris Fry  
Tim Heaney  
Jane Henderson  
Patricia Hewett (16), *Assistant Key*  
Myron Seth Isaacs (23), *Key*  
Mark Kotschnig (21), *Key*  
Emilio Lopez  
John Matlock, *Assistant Key*  
Beth Ozarow (27), *Out of House Key*  
Tara Pellack  
Sarah Shores (16), *Shop Mechanic*  
Morgan Edward Womble-Dahl

## ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT

Eugene Ahn (10), *Gel Room*  
Juan Aldana (19)  
Joni Ben-Yisrael

John Boatwright (36),  
*House Head Electrician*  
Ariel Bott, *Assistant Key Stage Left*  
Danielle Colburn  
Erik Docktor (16), *Projection Programmer*  
Amy Domjan, *Layout Electrician*  
Stephen Echerd (20)  
Will Grunig (21)  
Robert Haycock, *Key Stage Right*  
Ana Gabriela Hernandez-McKig,  
*Gel Room*  
Geoff Heron (14), *Pyro Technician*  
Bernard Honigman (24),  
*Key Light Board Operator*  
Karen Jine  
Brendan Kierans (10),  
*Electric Shop Foreperson*  
Sophie Landau  
Maria Mendoza (35), *Projection Coordinator*  
Jonathan Philpott-Kenny  
Lloyd Murphy, *Key Projectionist*  
Glenn Quilici, *Assistant Key Stage Right*  
Kevin Quintero  
Matthew Reynolds  
William Rodriguez  
Kirt Siders, *Data Administrator*  
Andrew Sproule (24), *Key Stage Left*  
Jax Steager,  
*Assistant Key Light Board Operator*

## AUDIO DEPARTMENT

Emad Dajani  
Christine Dumke  
Kimberly Griess, *Key*  
Tod Nixon, *Key* (25)  
Bryan Olson  
Claude Bauschinger

## MEDIA DEPARTMENT

Bob Hines  
Steven Gianfermo  
Mitchell Kell, *Video Editor*  
Neal Morrison  
Elliott Rice  
Brian Shimetz  
Uwe Willenbacher (15), *Audio Editor*

## STUDIO TEACHERS

Donnell Barnes, Carolyn Crimley,  
Susan Gill, Rhona Gordon, Dana Gray,  
Lua Hadar, Martha Harris, Karen Kindig,  
Victoria Northridge

## WRANGLERS

Kate Juliana, Liz Pasha, Diana Young

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

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PREMIERE

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Saariaho has written”

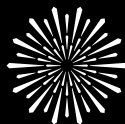
— NEW YORK TIMES

RESILIENCE AT THE EDGE OF TRAGEDY.

# Innocence

BY KAIJA SAARIAHO, SOFI OKSANEN,  
AND ALEKSI BARRIÈRE

JUNE 1, 7, 12, 16, 18, 21, 2024



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# San Francisco Opera Orchestra



**Kay Stern**  
Concertmaster



**Heidi Wilcox**  
Assistant  
Concertmaster



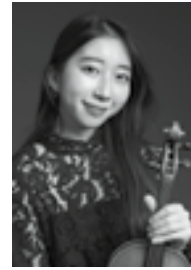
**Jennifer Cho**  
First Violin



**Dawn Harms**  
First Violin



**Mariya Borozina**  
First Violin



**Naoko Nakajima**  
First Violin



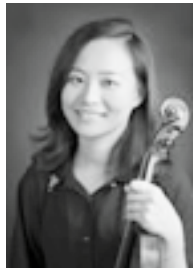
**Barbara Riccardi**  
First Violin



**Dian Zhang**  
First Violin



**Leonid Igudesman**  
First Violin



**Jennifer Hsieh**  
First Violin



**Asuka Annie Yano**  
First Violin



**Jeremy Preston**  
Principal  
Second Violin



**Martha Simonds**  
Associate Principal  
Second Violin



**Beni Shinohara**  
Assistant Principal  
Second Violin



**Eva Karasik**  
Second Violin



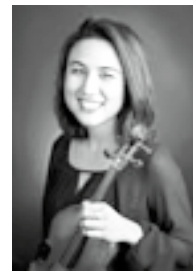
**Leslie Ludena**  
Second Violin



**Ka-Yeon Lee**  
Second Violin



**Aya Kiyonaga**  
Second Violin



**Maya Cohon**  
Second Violin



**Craig Reiss**  
Second Violin



**Heeguen Song**  
Second Violin<sup>^</sup>



**Carla Maria Rodrigues**  
Principal  
Viola



**Joy Fellows**  
Associate Principal  
Viola



**Emily Liu**  
Acting Assistant  
Principal Viola<sup>^</sup>



**Patricia Heller**  
Viola



**Natalia Vershilova**  
Viola



**Elizabeth Prior**  
Viola<sup>^</sup>



**Yi Zhou**  
Viola<sup>^</sup>



**Evan Kahn**  
Principal Cello



**Thalia Moore**  
Associate Principal  
Cello



**Peter Myers**  
Assistant Principal  
Cello



**Nora Pirquet**  
Cello



**Emil Miland**  
Cello



**Jung-Hsuan Ko**  
Cello



**Ruth Lane**  
Cello

<sup>^</sup> = Season Substitute

**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ORCHESTRA CONTINUED**



**Joseph Lescher**  
Principal  
Bass



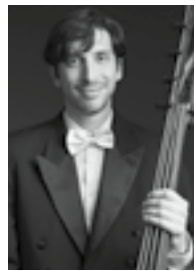
**Jonathan Lancelle**  
Associate Principal  
Bass



**Shinji Eshima**  
Acting Assistant  
Principal Bass



**Evan Hillis**  
Bass<sup>^</sup>



**Zach Hislop**  
Bass<sup>^</sup>



**Julie McKenzie**  
Principal  
Flute



**Susan Kang**  
Flute<sup>^</sup>



**Stephanie McNab**  
Flute & Piccolo



**Mingjia Liu**  
Principal  
Oboe



**Gabriel Young**  
Associate Principal  
Oboe



**Liam Bosset**  
Oboe/English Horn<sup>^</sup>



**Brooks Fisher**  
Oboe<sup>^</sup>



**José González  
Granero**  
Principal Clarinet



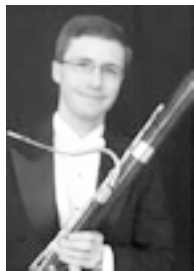
**Joanne Burke Eisler**  
Assistant Principal  
Clarinet



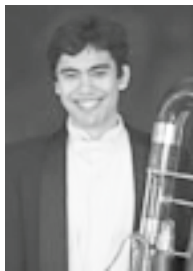
**Sean Krissman**  
Clarinet<sup>^</sup>



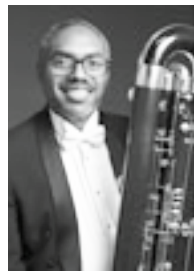
**Rufus Olivier**  
Principal  
Bassoon



**Daniel MacNeill**  
Bassoon



**Michael Severance**  
Bassoon &  
Contrabassoon



**Shawn Jones**  
Bassoon/  
Contrabassoon<sup>^</sup>



**Kevin Rivard**  
Principal  
Horn



**Keith Green**  
Horn



**Brian McCarty**  
Associate Principal  
Horn



**Phillip Palmore**  
Horn<sup>^</sup>



**Caitlyn Smith-  
Franklin**  
French Horn<sup>^</sup>



**Adam Luftman**  
Principal  
Trumpet



**John Pearson**  
Trumpet



**Scott Macomber**  
Trumpet<sup>^</sup>



**Michael Cox**  
Acting Principal  
Trombone



**Jeffrey Budin**  
Second Trombone<sup>^</sup>



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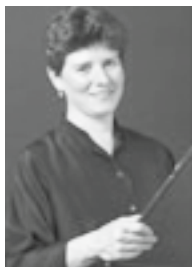


**Annabelle Taubl**  
Acting Principal  
Harp<sup>^</sup>

<sup>^</sup> = Season Substitute



**Tracy Davis**  
Orchestra Manager

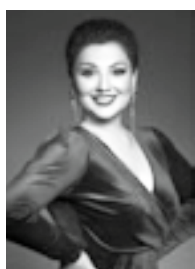


**Carrie Weick**  
Librarian

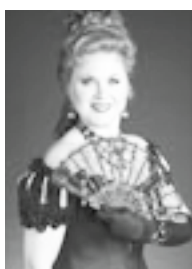
*Most photos by John Martin.  
Not pictured: Wentao Jiang (Oboe),  
Junghwan Lee (Clarinet),  
Meredith Brown (Horn),  
Kevin Myers (Orchestra Operations Manager),  
Krisha Montmorency (Assistant Librarian)*

^ = Season Substitute

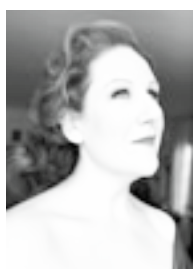
## San Francisco Opera Regular Chorus



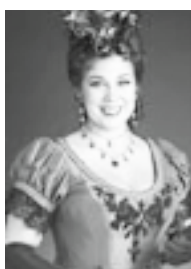
**Nadima Avakian**  
Soprano



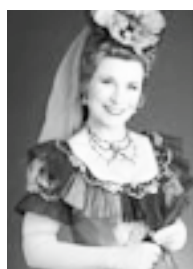
**Kathleen Bayler**  
Soprano



**Cheryl Cain**  
Soprano



**Sara Colburn**  
Soprano  
*Leave of Absence*



**Claire Kelm**  
Soprano



**Crystal Kim**  
Soprano



**Elisabeth Rom Lucio**  
Soprano



**Liesl McPherrin**  
Soprano



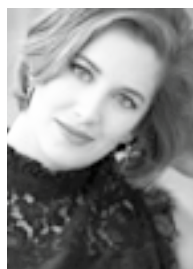
**Angela Eden Moser**  
Soprano



**Rachelle Perry**  
Soprano



**Carole Schaffer**  
Soprano  
*Leave of Absence*



**Jesslyn Thomas**  
Soprano



**Buffy Baggott**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Janet Campbell**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Edith Dowd**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Stella Hannock**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Silvie Jensen**  
Mezzo-Soprano



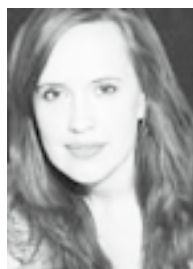
**Sally Mouzon**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Sarah Nadreau**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Erin Neff**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Laurel Cameron  
Porter**  
Mezzo-Soprano

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**Alan Cochran**  
Tenor



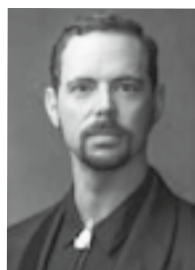
**Kevin Gino**  
Tenor



**Daniel Harper**  
Tenor



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Tenor



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Baritone



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Baritone



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Baritone



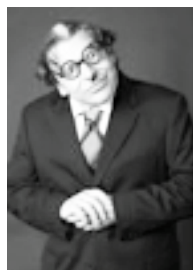
**John Fulton**  
Baritone



**Jere Torkelsen**  
Baritone



**Wilford Kelly**  
Bass



**Bojan Knežević**  
Bass



**William O'Neill**  
Bass



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Bass



**Valery Portnov**  
Bass

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**Brett Conway**



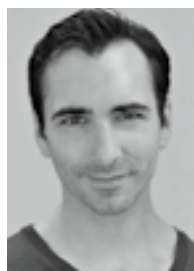
**Blanche Hampton**



**Bryan Ketron**  
*Leave of Absence*



**Rachel Speidel Little**  
*Leave of Absence*



**Christopher Nachtrab**



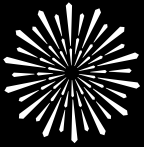
**Jekyns Peláez**  
*Leave of Absence*



**Chiharu Shibata**

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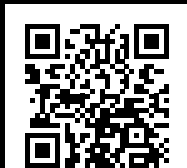
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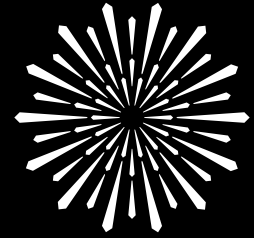
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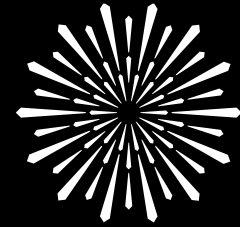
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# Lineage

BY GENERAL DIRECTOR MATTHEW SHILVOCK

I like to say that opera is a participatory sport. If we are doing our job, you the audience should feel like you are not just observing something on stage, but you are actually a part of it, emotionally connected to the stage. That is part of the extraordinary potential of opera. We breathe through these stories collectively, and the emotional intensity of the artists onstage melds with our own emotional experiences.

That concept of opera as participation came into particular relief a few weeks ago. Rhiannon Giddens, the co-composer and librettist of *Omar*, joined us for a day of rehearsals, jetting in both from preparations for her tour as artistic director of the Silk Road Ensemble, and from primary source research at the University of North Carolina. As Rhiannon has done in the other cities that have produced *Omar*, it is imperative to her that she prepare the cast, chorus and company for what it means to bring this opera to life, and, to dance.

And dance we did! Rhiannon led us on an hour-long square-dancing workshop, with techniques, music, and calls that tied back directly to early 19th-century North Carolina. As Rhiannon shared, by connecting to these traditions, she was able to take us back to glimpse the cultural traditions that Omar ibn Said might have experienced himself—social dance forms that, like Omar’s writings, were a way of retaining identity amidst the oppression of slavery.

At the core of Rhiannon’s music are the deep-rooted traditions of North Carolina, carrying forth the artistry of musicians like Joe Thompson (1918-2012), one of the last proponents of the Black string band tradition and himself carrying forward a lineage from pre-Civil War music. Through these lineages are contributions of Black Americans to the square-dancing tradition including the



KRISTEN LOKEN

caller—a mainstay of American dance culture for at least two hundred years. The caller helps to keep the energy of the dance high, allowing it to be created in real time.

And that is what happened in our large rehearsal room. On an uncommonly sweltering day in the city, Rhiannon paired us up and taught us the-basic dance steps, teaching us to create just enough pressure with our hands, such that each couple supports each other in beautiful equilibrium. Then the couples joined into fours, the fours became eights, and the eights became sixteens, the dance becoming more and more communal. And then, with Rhiannon calling, suddenly the whole room was one big circle—maybe sixty of us—promenading, handing off to each other around the circle, and eventually dancing in a huge snaking line that coiled up in a spiral before simultaneously unwinding on itself. Sixty people, a whole community, completely in sync with each other.

These dances represent a deep and complex history: they are shaped by the horrors of slavery, but are also expressions of hope and community. Being invited to participate in this workshop was a profoundly impactful opportunity to step into and reflect on this complex and traumatic history. The group’s singular focus bound us together and reminded us of our collective responsibility to each other. For me, it was also a beautiful example of the kind of cultural intelligence we are working to build into all of our spaces and work at San Francisco Opera.

The Opera House can and should be a place where we gather in community with each other. *Omar* is an extraordinary opportunity for us to invite new communities, particularly members of the African Diaspora and members of the Muslim faith, into the experience of an opera that connects us to both the pain and the joy of our shared history together. 🌱

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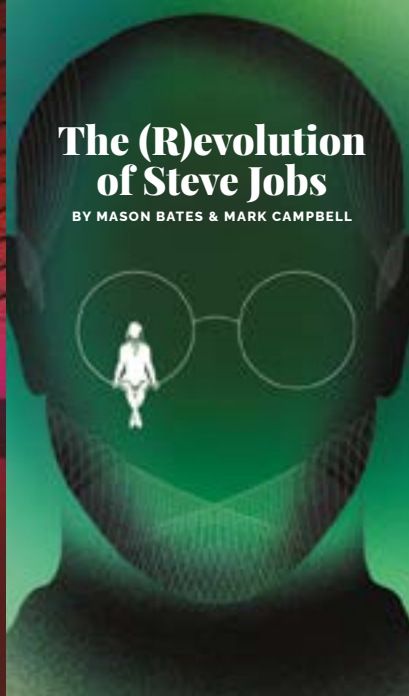


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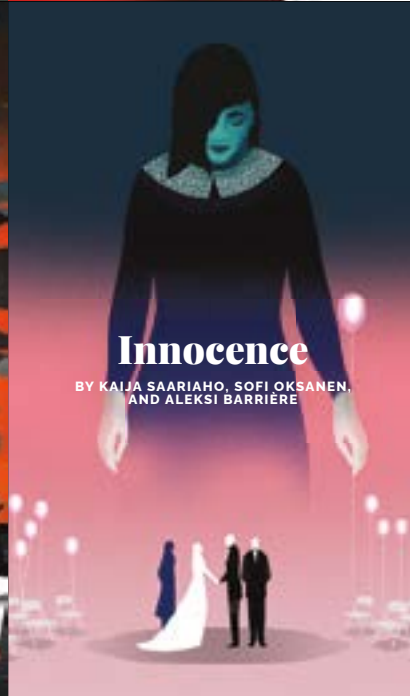
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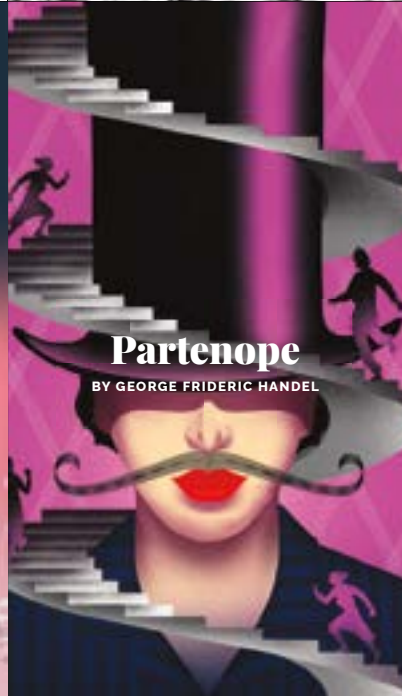
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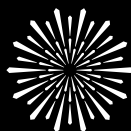
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