



SAN FRANCISCO  
OPERA



Illustrations by Brian Stauffer

## ***THE MONKEY KING COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED***

Community and philanthropic leaders come together in support of ***The Monkey King***, the highly anticipated new opera by Huang Ruo and David Henry Hwang, premiering at San Francisco Opera in November 2025

San Francisco, CA (July 29, 2025) — San Francisco Opera announces the formation of ***The Monkey King* Committee**. A distinguished and diverse array of influential leaders spanning business, nonprofit, tech and cultural sectors have come together in support of one of the most anticipated world premieres of recent years, composer Huang Ruo and librettist David Henry Hwang's ***The Monkey King*** (猴王悟空), opening on November 14, 2025 at the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco.

The Committee is led by San Francisco Opera Board of Directors members and Committee Co-Chairs Jerome Dodson, Doreen Woo Ho and Soo Venkatesan. The Committee's Honorary Chairs are Jensen and Lori Huang.

"*The Monkey King* is a timeless epic that celebrates courage, transformation, and the spirit of adventure," said Jensen Huang, founder and CEO of NVIDIA. "This reimagining of the classic *Journey to the West*—brought to life on the San Francisco Opera stage—is a breathtaking

fusion of Chinese legend and American craftsmanship and artistry coming together for an incredible display."

"I am excited to lead this Committee to promote and fundraise for this innovative and unique opera that brings the best of the best of Chinese classics to the operatic stage," said Committee Co-Chair **Doreen Woo Ho**. "To me this opera also represents a huge opportunity to build a people-to-people cultural bridge between the U.S. and China as *Monkey King*, who is such a beloved figure, resonates across so many Asian communities here and in Asia."

San Francisco Opera General Director **Matthew Shilvock** said: "From the minute we announced that we were creating an operatic version of *The Monkey King*, the Bay Area has had such incredible energy for this project. *Journey to the West* has such a strong, emotional connection for those who grew up with the adventures and irreverent charm of Sun Wukong, and it's a joy to have this incredible group of committee members helping us bring *The Monkey King* to life. Extraordinary things emerge from the Bay Area, and it's an honor to be partnering with our *Monkey King* Committee to celebrate the birth of this amazing artistic creation."

#### *The Monkey King Committee (to date)*

Jensen & Lori Huang, Honorary Chairs

Jerome Dodson, Doreen Woo Ho and Soo Venkatesan, Co-Chairs

#### Honorary Committee Members

- Carol Franc Buck Foundation
- Chinese Heritage Foundation of Minnesota
- Emmanuel Chao
- Jerome & Thao Dodson
- Sue Graham Johnston & Eric Johnston
- Koret Foundation
- Lyna Lam & Chris Larsen
- Margaret Liu Collins
- Isabel & Insik Rhee
- Marieke & Jeff Rothschild
- Maria Manetti Shrem
- Nadine M. Tang
- Akiko Yamazaki & Jerry Yang

#### Committee Members

- Pearl Lam Bergad
- Claire Bobrow

- Ken Fong
- Tim Kahn
- Fred Levin
- Annie Liu
- Maryam Muduroglu
- Peggy Nute
- Shirley Soong
- Jay Xu
- Melinda Yee Franklin
- Mark Young
- Jian Zhang

The Committee will serve as ambassadors for *The Monkey King*, raising awareness and philanthropic support for this major new operatic expression of the beloved and iconic hero in Chinese culture whose story symbolizes transformation, perseverance and the pursuit of wisdom. Events hosted by the Committee include an Opening Night Dinner Celebration on November 14 immediately prior to the world premiere performance of *The Monkey King*.

Commissioned by San Francisco Opera in partnership with the Chinese Heritage Foundation of Minnesota, [\*The Monkey King\* \(猴王悟空\)](#) is based on the opening chapters of *Journey to the West*, the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) novel widely considered one of China's greatest literary classics. This new adaptation for the Western opera stage, performed in English and Chinese and uniting the disciplines of opera, movement and puppetry, follows the ambitious young monkey born from a stone who challenges the gods in a bid for immortality. In their newest collaboration, Huang Ruo and David Henry Hwang have blended ancient Chinese and contemporary Western traditions to create a thrilling new incarnation of the mythic action hero, whose popularity has exploded through film, television, animation and, most recently, the 2024 blockbuster video game *Black Myth: Wukong*.

The Monkey King's fantastical world will be brought to life for the stage by American Repertory Theater Artistic Director Diane Paulus and acclaimed designer and puppeteer Basil Twist, with costumes designed by Anita Yavich. The creative team also includes lighting designer Ayumu “Poe” Saegusa, projection designer Hana S. Kim, choreographer Ann Yee and Peking Opera consultant Jamie Guan. Led by conductor Carolyn Kuan, the cast includes tenor Kang Wang as the Monkey King, tenor Konu Kim as the Jade Emperor, soprano Mei Gui Zhang as Guanyin and baritone Jusung Gabriel Park as Subhuti. The Monkey King's high-octane adventures—from the depths of the sea to his epic battle with the gods in heaven—will be balanced by moments of repose with the goddess Guanyin and a chorus of

bodhisattvas reflecting on Monkey's progress in Buddhist sutras (hear Guanyin's aria "All dharmas are equal" performed by Mei Gui Zhang and pianist John Churchwell, [HERE](#)).

The eight performances of *The Monkey King* are scheduled for November 14 (7:30 p.m.), 16 (2 p.m.), 18 (7:30 p.m.), 20 (7:30 p.m.), 22 (7:30 p.m.), 25 (7:30 p.m.), 28 (7:30 p.m.) and 30 (2 p.m.) at the War Memorial Opera House. The November 18 performance will be livestreamed with a 48-hour on-demand viewing window. For complete cast, production and ticket information, visit [sfopera.com/monkeyking](https://sfopera.com/monkeyking).

## ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Under the leadership of Tad and Dianne Taube General Director Matthew Shilvock and Caroline H. Hume Music Director Eun Sun Kim, San Francisco Opera celebrated its Centennial Season in 2022–23. Beginning with its first seasons during the 1920s, San Francisco Opera has long been a home for new operas and, since 1961, more than 30 new commissions and co-commissions have been presented by the Company. A focus on the Chinese and Chinese American literary traditions began in 2008 with the world premiere of *The Bonesetter's Daughter* by composer Stewart Wallace and librettist Amy Tan. *Dream of the Red Chamber*, a commissioned opera by Bright Sheng and David Henry Hwang, followed in 2016 and was subsequently presented at the Hong Kong Arts Festival, on tour in China and in a 2022 revival at the War Memorial Opera House. In addition to the world premiere of [The Monkey King](#), the Company's upcoming 103rd season includes a new production of Wagner's [Parsifal](#), a 25th-anniversary presentation of Jake Heggie and Terrence McNally's [Dead Man Walking](#) (a San Francisco Opera commission in 2000), Verdi's [Rigoletto](#), Rossini's [The Barber of Seville](#), Strauss' [Elektra](#), and a variety of concerts and special events. Learn more at [sfopera.com](https://sfopera.com).

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