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# Dialogues of the Carmelites

BY FRANCIS POULENC



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## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

September 9, 2022

### **100th Anniversary of the San Francisco Opera**

On behalf of the State of California, it is my honor to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the San Francisco Opera as you open the doors for the centennial season.

Since 1923, the San Francisco Opera has served as a hearth for the Bay Area community and an inspiring vision of artistic innovation in our Golden State. Thank you to San Francisco Opera's talented artists and dedicated staff who have partnered to enrich Californians' cultural experiences and encouraged audiences to discover their own creative passions – myself included. The San Francisco Opera has been bringing joy and awe to my family for years, and I take special pride in celebrating this milestone.

With everything the San Francisco Opera has achieved in its treasured history, I know it will continue to pave the way for the next generation of performers and usher in new waves of opera-lovers. Please accept my deep gratitude for your significant contributions to our state and my best wishes on your continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom", written over a horizontal line.

Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California

# At a Glance

## DIALOGUES OF THE CARMELITES

BY FRANCIS POULENC

**Structure:** 3 acts, with 1 intermission

**Running time:** 3 hrs

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

### Key Characters:

*Blanche de la Force*—An aristocratic woman who joins the Carmelite order

*Mme. de Croissy*—The Mother Superior or prioress of the convent

*Mme. de Lidoine*—The new prioress

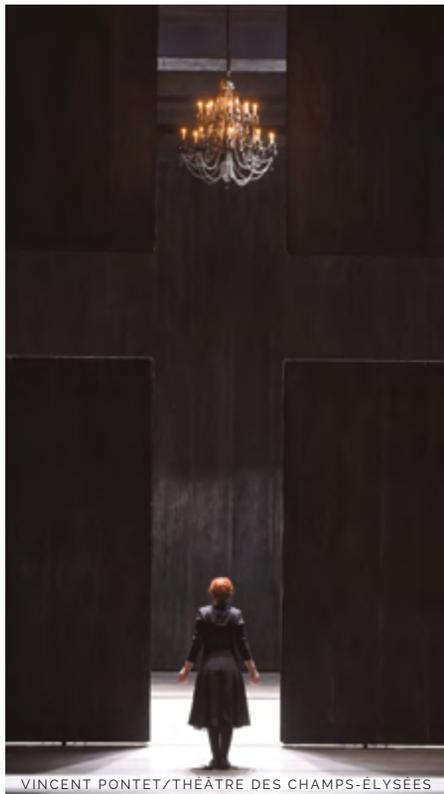
*Mother Marie*—The sub-prioress

*Sister Constance*—A young novice

*Chevalier de la Force*—Blanche's brother

### \*\*\*SPOILER ALERT\*\*\*

**Listen for:** In the opera's final scene, sixteen nuns face execution with devout resolution while singing the "Salve Regina" hymn. The chorus of voices is reduced, one by one, as each nun is silenced by the guillotine.



VINCENT PONTET/THÉÂTRE DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES

## WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Welcome to San Francisco Opera's Centennial Season! We've arrived at this incredible milestone because of the passion and dedication of our audience and donor family. *Your* support has sustained us through the pandemic and given San Francisco Opera the financial stability and creative inspiration to offer an amazing 100th Season to our community.



John A. Gunn



Keith B. Geeslin

Our Opening Weekend encapsulated our company at its very best. Please enjoy the photo montage of the *Opera Ball: Centennial Celebration* concert and festivities on pages 8 through 11 of this program book. The world premiere of John Adams's *Antony and Cleopatra* has been enthusiastically received by audiences and critics alike. Thousands of friends and neighbors gathered for a fantastic *Opera in the Park* concert.

Robert Carsen's beloved production of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* made its Bay Area debut on September 25. Three incredible artists made their American debuts—soprano Evgenia Muraveva, mezzo-soprano Aigul Akhmetshina, and conductor Vassilis Christopoulos. If you haven't already seen it, we encourage you to do so.

San Francisco Opera presented the American premiere of Poulenc's hauntingly beautiful *Dialogues of the Carmelites* in 1957, showcasing the artistry of then emerging star soprano Leontyne Price. We are fortunate to have Eun Sun Kim, our Caroline H. Hume Music Director, on the podium to lead this 20th century masterpiece. Thank you for being with us today for the emotional journey presented in this production.

The Dolby Family's "Opera for the Bay" program provides 100 \$10 tickets in great seating locations for new ticket buyers this Centennial Season. We are deeply grateful to the Dolby Family for their generous support of the Company's mission to share the transformative power of opera with our community. Please tell your family and friends about the program and help us grow our audiences. Tickets go on sale one month before the opening performance of each opera and are available while supplies last.

Other wonderful community events this fall are our *Community Open House* in the War Memorial Opera House on October 23rd, *Opera at the Ballpark* (simulcast of opening night of *La Traviata*) at Oracle Park on November 11th and *The Traviata Encounter* in the War Memorial Opera House on November 19th.

San Francisco Opera's Centennial Season has something for everyone! Your participation is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to seeing you again soon and all season long.

With gratitude,

John A. Gunn

Chairman of the Board

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Keith B. Geeslin

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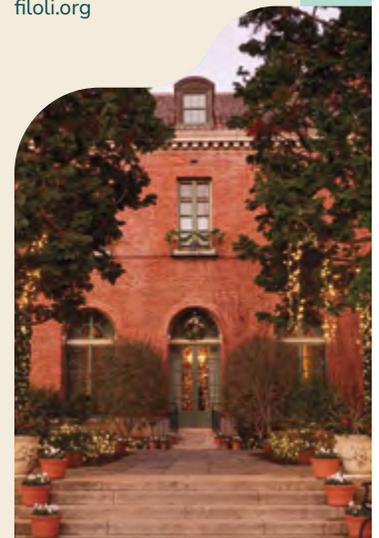
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# OPERA BALL

THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

A new century dawned at San Francisco Opera on September 9, with a special edition of the annual Opera Ball benefit gala. Titled *The Centennial Celebration*, the event launched the company's 100th season with a sumptuous party under the dome of San Francisco's historic city hall. The festivities continued at the War Memorial Opera House, where four top opera stars—Nadine Sierra, Michael Fabiano, Pene Pati and Lucas Meachem—took the stage under the baton of conductor Eun Sun Kim. Joyful melodies filled the air, including a traditional Maori chant, Queen's "Don't Stop Me Now," and the world premiere of *ffanfare!!* by composer Texu Kim, commissioned specifically for the occasion.



Lorna Meyer Calas, Dennis Calas



Texu Kim



Jane Mudge, Larry Binkley, Kathy Huber, Shannon Cronan



Pene Pati performs "A Te Tarakihi"



Lucas Meachem sings "Don't Stop Me Now"



Priscilla and Keith Geeslin



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Eun Sun Kim conducts the final scene with Amina Edris as Cleopatra.



John Adams and Elkhanah Pulitzer



Keith Geeslin, John Gunn, Priscilla Geeslin, Matthew Shilvock



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WORLD PREMIERE  
**Antony & Cleopatra**

San Francisco Opera opened its 100th season with a concert—and then the very next day, the company was back on stage, ready to inaugurate its second century with a world premiere. That Saturday, September 10, the curtain rose on a new masterpiece from acclaimed composer John Adams: *Antony and Cleopatra*, the story of an Egyptian queen and a Roman general locked in a doomed romance. Soprano Amina Edris and bass-baritone Gerald Finley brought to life the title roles.



Mauro Zanetti, Maria Manetti Shrem, Amina Edris, Pene Pati



Paul Appleby, John Adams, Eun Sun Kim



Mimi Lien



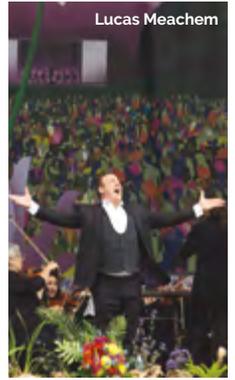
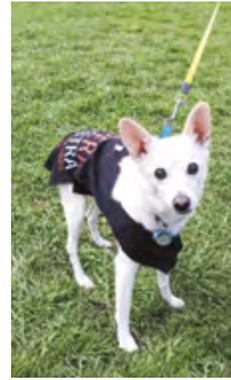
Gerald Finley, Elkhanah Pulitzer



John Adams, Amina Edris, Matthew Shilvock



Bertie Bialek Elliott, Elkhanah Pulitzer



# Opera in the Park 2022

Melodies drifted across the green expanse of Robin Williams Meadow on Sunday, September 11, as San Francisco Opera concluded its opening weekend with a free concert: *Opera in the Park*. In its 47th year, *Opera in the Park* packed the lawn with thousands of music-lovers, drawn to the spectacle of world-class singers on an open-air stage. Eun Sun Kim conducted a diverse lineup that ranged from beloved arias to traditional spirituals and a rock anthem.



Melody Moore and Eun Sun Kim with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra



Michael Fabiano and Eun Sun Kim



Aigul Akhmetshina and Rennita Miller



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November 19, 2022 at 7:30pm

War Memorial Opera House



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October 23, 2022

War Memorial Opera House

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November 11, 2022 at 7:30pm

Oracle Park

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November 19, 2022–August 20, 2023

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## **Bernard & Barbro Osher (Production Sponsor)**

A native of Maine, Bernard Osher became involved with San Francisco Opera as a subscriber 50 years ago, shortly after moving here from New York. He and his wife, Barbro, a native of Sweden, have supported every aspect of the Company's work, from artist appearances to production facilities. Established in 1977, The Bernard Osher Foundation has funded virtually every major arts organization in the area, including youth programs. Higher education initiatives include scholarships for community college students in California and Maine and for baccalaureate students at universities in every state and the District of Columbia; Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes, serving adults on 125 campuses nationwide; and Osher Centers for Integrative Health at ten of the nation's leading medical schools and at the

Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden. Bernard is a longstanding member of the Opera's Board of Directors, serving on the Chairman's Council. Barbro is Honorary Consul General of Sweden for California and serves as Chairman of the Board of the Osher Foundation. Together they recently established the Osher Audience of the Future Fund, which gives San Francisco Opera an incredible resource to connect art and audiences together in new ways, ensuring that the Osher Theatre (War Memorial auditorium) remains a vibrant, energized, and full-to-the-rafters building in which to experience transformational opera.



DREW ALTIZER PHOTOGRAPHY

## **Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem / Emerging Stars Fund**

**(Sponsor, Ben Bliss, Michelle Bradley, Deanna Breiwick, Taylor Raven)**

After a career devoted to his publishing businesses in Japan and Europe, the creation of Clos Pegase Winery in California's Napa Valley, and his art collection, Jan Shrem, in joyous partnership with his wife, Maria Manetti Shrem, is bringing his focus and affection to philanthropic causes that advance education and the performing and visual arts. Though they grew up half-a-world apart, Jan and Maria both developed a love of opera at a young age. While their lives led them each around the globe, their individual passions eventually 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; and the Luminaries Concert Fund enables San Francisco Opera to bring legendary artists to the stage for special events and performances.

# Individual Giving

The collective support of San Francisco Opera's generous donor family keeps world-class opera on the stage and brings transformative community programs to students and families. Each year, support from individuals like you accounts for 75% of the revenue needed to create great opera.

**With gratitude, we recognize donors below in bold who have made increased gifts during this time frame to support our Centennial Season.** Listed gifts were received between **August 1, 2021 and September 27, 2022.** We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of our donor listings. If we have misspelled or omitted a name, please accept our apology and notify us at **(415) 565-3212** so that we may update our records accordingly.

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“My family has a long tradition of supporting San Francisco Opera, beginning with my Grandfather, A.P. Giannini, who secured the first loan in 1924, then for many years with my dear husband Jim, and ultimately with my boys Keith and Kevin. What has really made it special in more recent years were the personal relationships we’ve formed with our many Adler fellows.”

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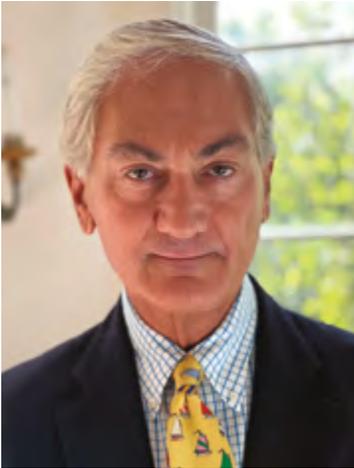
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Nadja Michael as Emilia Marty in Janáček's The Makropulos Case. / CORY WEAVER

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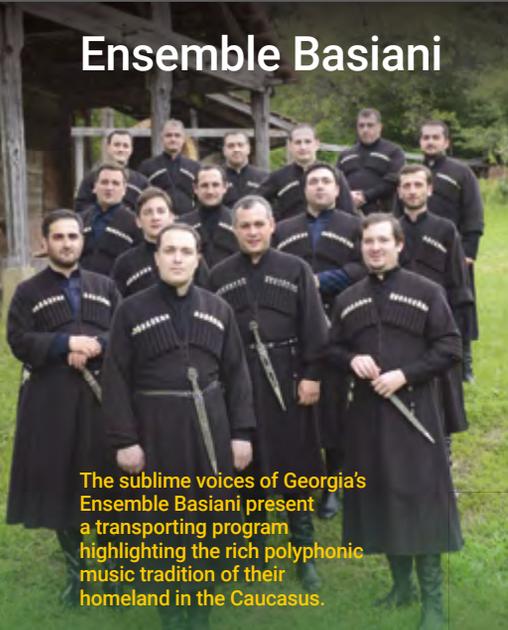


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“Beginning more than 100 years ago with grandfather Horace Clifton, our family’s love and support of San Francisco Opera has been passed down through our parents to us, and now to the next generation.”

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## Ensemble Basiani



The sublime voices of Georgia's Ensemble Basiani present a transporting program highlighting the rich polyphonic music tradition of their homeland in the Caucasus.

**Nov 3**  
 FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
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## Ying Fang, *soprano* Ken Noda, *piano*

The lyric soprano Ying Fang has appeared as Ilia in *Idomeneo*, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* to great acclaim on international stages. She is joined by Ken Noda in a program of songs by Schubert, Schumann, Mahler, R. Strauss, and others.



**Nov 6**  
 HERTZ HALL

THANKSGIVING WEEKEND

## Vienna Boys Choir *Christmas in Vienna*



The universally adored Vienna Boys Choir visits Berkeley in a festive program of Austrian folk songs, classical masterpieces, and Christmas hymns and carols from across the globe.

**Nov 26**  
 ZELLERBACH HALL

## Joyce DiDonato: *Eden*

A Cal Performances Co-commission

DiDonato is joined by the early-music ensemble Il Pomo d'Oro in a theatrical, semi-staged concert that features music from the 17th to 21st centuries by Handel, Gluck, Cavalli, Wagner, Mahler, Ives, and Copland.



**Jan 21**  
 ZELLERBACH HALL

## The English Concert

Harry Bicket, *conductor*  
 The Clarion Choir  
 Steven Fox, *artistic director*

Britain's eminent early-music ensemble returns to Berkeley to perform Handel's glorious *Solomon* (1748), based on Biblical stories of the great king's wisdom and justice and the ushering-in of a golden age of peace, piety, and prosperity.



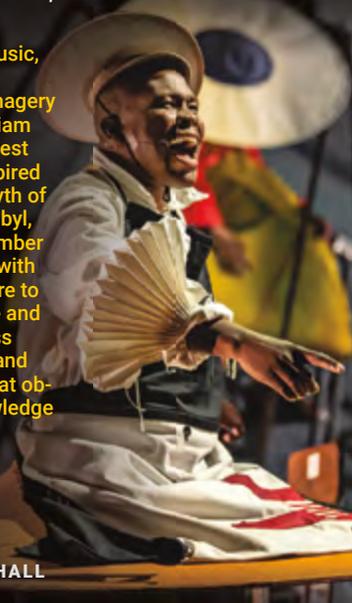
**Mar 5**  
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SCAN TO JOIN

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

**WELCOME! WE'RE SO PLEASED YOU'RE HERE.  
PLEASE READ OUR GUIDE TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TIME AT THE OPERA.**

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**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.

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- Take photos before, during intermission, or after the performance, and leave cameras and recording devices off during performances.
- Keep your well-fitted mask on during the performance and when not eating or drinking in the lobbies.
- Enjoy food and drinks pre-show and during intermission, before entering the theater. To keep everyone safe, food and drinks are not allowed inside the theater.
- 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.

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- **Café Express (Lower Level, Open 2 hours before curtain)**
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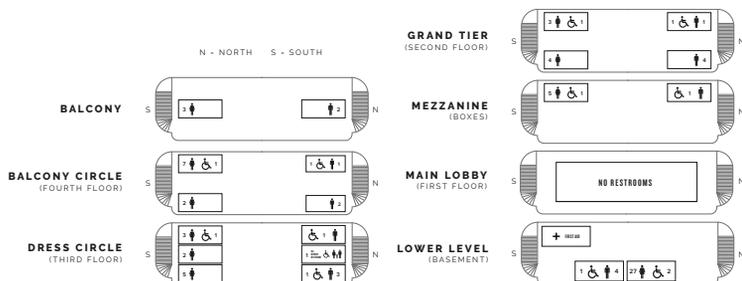
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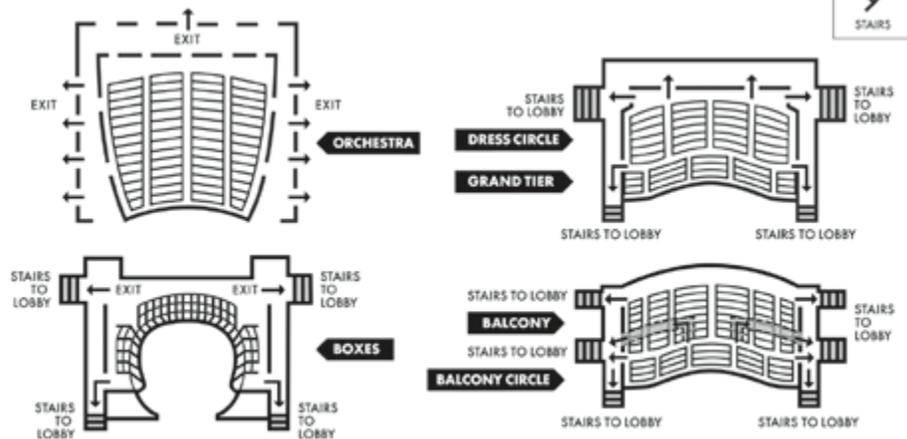
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# Streaming the First Century: Session 2

As part of the Company's centennial celebrations, Streaming the First Century provides free access to historic San Francisco Opera performances, archival interviews, and much more! Session 1 highlights the Slavic repertory, while Session 2 (now live) features French works. To explore, visit [sfopera.com/firstcentury](https://sfopera.com/firstcentury).

## JULES MASSENET'S *WERTHER*

The chemistry between Spanish tenor **José Carreras** as Werther and Detroit-born soprano **Maria Ewing** as Charlotte leads to a performance of blazing intensity in this 1978 broadcast. Maestro **Antonio de Almeida** conducts Massenet's stormy masterpiece, which also features soprano **Kathleen Battle** as Sophie.



Kathleen Battle as Sophie, 1978. / RON SCHERL



José Carreras as Werther and Maria Ewing as Charlotte, 1978. / RON SCHERL

## GUSTAVE CHARPENTIER'S *LOUISE*

Charpentier's rarely performed love letter to the city of Paris bursts with romantic ardor and exquisite vocalism in this souvenir from the 1999 season. The cast, who performed their roles together only in San Francisco, is headed by **Renée Fleming** in the title role, **Jerry Hadley** as Julian, and **Samuel Ramey** and **Felicity Palmer** as Louise's protective parents. Former General Director **Lotfi Mansouri** directs and **Patrick Summers** conducts.



Lotfi Mansouri / SAN FRANCISCO OPERA



Renée Fleming as Louise, 1999. / KEN FRIEDMAN

## ADDITIONAL SESSION 2 FEATURES INCLUDE:

- Excerpts from Massenet's *Manon* (1939), starring early San Francisco Opera favorites Tito Schipa and Bidú Sayão; the Company premiere of Berlioz's epic *Les Troyens* (1966); a star-powered broadcast of Massenet's *Thaïs* (1976) with Beverly Sills and Sherrill Milnes; and the historic United States premiere of *Saint François d'Assise* (2002), Olivier Messiaen's only opera based on the city of San Francisco's namesake.
  - New essays by baritone Kenneth Overton, dramaturg Roger Pines, and writer Paul Thomason.
- The oldest known San Francisco Opera-adjacent recording: a 1925 piano roll performed by Company founder Gaetano Merola.
  - And much more!

# Dialogues of the Carmelites

(DIALOGUES DES CARMÉLITES)

OPERA IN THREE ACTS BY FRANCIS POULENC

LIBRETTO BY THE COMPOSER BASED ON THE DRAMA BY GEORGES BERNANOS

ADAPTED WITH THE AUTHORIZATION OF EMMET LAVERY;

INSPIRED BY A NOVEL OF GERTRUD VON LE FORT AND

BY A SCENARIO OF REV. FATHER BRUCKBERGER AND PHILIPPE AGOSTINI

Production Sponsors:

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Ben Bliss, Michelle Bradley, Deanna Breiwick, and Taylor Raven's appearances  
are made possible by a gift to  
the Emerging Stars Fund by Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem.

Additional support provided by Jerome Guillen and Jeremy Gallaher.

**OCTOBER 15, 18, 21, 26, 30, 2022**

The performance will last approximately three hours, including one intermission.



**THE FUTURE OF OPERA**

# Dialogues of the Carmelites

## ACT I

The first signs of the French Revolution are beginning to shake the country. In his library, the Marquis de la Force and his son, the Chevalier, are worried about Blanche, the Chevalier's fearful, nervous sister, whose carriage has been held up by a mob on her way home. When Blanche arrives, she makes light of the incident, but her anxiety is revealed when a servant's shadow frightens her as she leaves the room. Shaken, she returns to tell her father that she has made up her mind to become a nun.

Weeks later at the Carmelite convent in Compiègne, the aged and ailing prioress Madame de Croissy interviews Blanche and makes it clear to the girl that the convent is a house of prayer, not a refuge. Nevertheless, the prioress is touched by Blanche's resolve to embrace her new life.

In the workroom of the convent, Blanche and the young Sister Constance discuss their fear of death, which Constance claims to have overcome. Blanche admits her envy of her companion's straightforward and easygoing nature. Constance shocks Blanche by telling her that she knows that they will both die young and on the same day.

In the infirmary, Madame de Croissy is lying on her deathbed, struggling to appear calm. She blesses Blanche and consigns her, as the youngest member of the order, to the care of the loyal Mother Marie. The prioress confesses her terror in the hour of death, then falls lifeless.

## —INTERMISSION—

## ACT II

That night in the chapel, Constance and Blanche keep vigil by the prioress's bier. Blanche is overcome by fear and is about to run off when Mother Marie appears. Realizing that Blanche is genuinely afraid, she tries to calm her. Constance hopes that Mother Marie will be the new prioress. She tells Blanche that she wonders why a God-fearing person like Madame de Croissy had to die such an agonizing death. Perhaps, she says, people don't die for themselves but for others. Someone else will be surprised one day to find death easy.

Madame Lidoine has been appointed the new prioress. In the chapter room, she addresses the convent, counseling patience and humility.

A visitor is announced—it is Blanche's brother, who is about to flee the country. He urges Blanche to leave the convent and return to their father. Blanche replies that her duty is to her sisters.

In the sacristy, the chaplain, forbidden to perform his duties, celebrates his last mass. The nuns discuss the fear that has grabbed the country, and Mother Marie wonders if self-sacrifice will be their destiny. Madame Lidoine reminds them that martyrs are not chosen by their own will, only by God's. Two commissioners enter and tell the sisters that they have been expelled from the convent. One of them, speaking quietly to Mother Marie, adds that he will do what he can to help them get away safely. One of the sisters gives Blanche a figurine of the Christ Child. When revolutionary cries are heard from outside, Blanche nervously drops the figure, breaking it. She is horrified by this omen.

## ACT III

In the devastated chapel, Mother Marie suggests, in Madame Lidoine's absence, that they all take a vow of martyrdom by unanimous decision. Noting Blanche's reaction, the others suspect that she will vote against it. When the secret ballot reveals one dissenter, Constance claims it was she and asks to reverse her vote so that the vow can proceed. Blanche, afraid to live or to die, runs away. Soldiers lead the sisters from the convent.

Blanche is forced to work as a servant in the ransacked mansion of her father, who has been sent to the guillotine. Mother Marie finds her there and tries to persuade her to return to the sisters.

The nuns have been arrested. At the Conciergerie prison, Madame Lidoine joins the sisters in their vow of martyrdom. Constance says that she has dreamed of Blanche's return. A jailer enters and reads the death sentence. Madame Lidoine blesses the sisters. When Mother Marie learns from the chaplain that the nuns will die, she resolves to join them, but the chaplain reminds her that it is for God to decide whether or not she will be a martyr.

A crowd has gathered on the Place de la Révolution. The Carmelites walk toward the guillotine, led by Madame Lidoine, singing the "Salve Regina." With each stroke of the blade, their voices are silenced, one by one, finally leaving only Constance. On her way to the scaffold, she sees Blanche step up from the crowd, take up the chant, and follow her to her death. 🕯

REPRINTED COURTESY OF THE METROPOLITAN OPERA

# Dialogues of the Carmelites

Opera in three acts by **Francis Poulenc**

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(Sung in French with English supertitles)

Conductor

**Eun Sun Kim**

Production

**Olivier Py**\*

Revival Director

**Daniel Izzo**\*

Production Designer

**Pierre-André Weitz**\*

Lighting Designer

**Bertrand Killy**\*

Chorus Director

**John Keene**

Assistant Conductor

**Robert Mollicone**

Prompter

**Matthew Piatt**

Musical Preparation

**John Churchwell**

**Blair Salter**\*

**Andrew King**

**Fabrizio Corona**

Diction

**Patricia Kristof-Moy**

Supertitles

**Scott F. Heumann**

**Jeremy Johnson**

Assistant Director

**Morgan Robinson**

Stage Manager

**Jayne O'Hara**

Assistant Stage Managers

**Jonathan S. Campbell**

**Collette Berg**

**Anna Reetz**

**Rachel Garoon**

Fight Director

**Dave Maier**

Costume Supervisor

**Cassandra Carpenter**

Hair and Makeup

**Jeanna Parham**

Co-production of Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Bruxelles

The projected titles used in this production are owned by Houston Grand Opera: Khori Dastoor, General Director and CEO.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2022 • 7:30 PM

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18 • 7:30 PM

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21 • 7:30 PM

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26 • 7:30 PM

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30 • 2 PM

## CAST

(in order of vocal appearance)

<i>The Chevalier de la Force</i>	<b>Ben Bliss</b>
<i>The Marquis de la Force</i>	<b>Dale Travis</b>
<i>Blanche de la Force</i>	<b>Heidi Stober</b>
<i>Thierry, valet to the Marquis</i>	<b>Efraín Solís</b>
<i>Mme. de Croissy, Prioress</i>	<b>Michaela Schuster</b> *
<i>Sister Constance, a young nun</i>	<b>Deanna Breiwick</b> *
<i>M. Javelinot, a doctor</i>	<b>Efraín Solís</b>
<i>Mother Marie, the assistant Prioress</i>	<b>Melody Moore</b>
<i>Mme. Lidoine, the new Prioress</i>	<b>Michelle Bradley</b> *
<i>The Chaplain</i>	<b>Brenton Ryan</b>
<i>Sister Mathilde</i>	<b>Taylor Raven</b>
<i>1st Commissioner</i>	<b>Christopher Oglesby</b>
<i>2nd Commissioner</i>	<b>Hadleigh Adams</b>
<i>Mother Jeanne</i>	<b>Catherine Cook</b>
<i>1st Officer</i>	<b>Hadleigh Adams</b>
<i>The Jailor</i>	<b>Efraín Solís</b>

### CARMELITE NUNS

*Mother Gerald:* **Deborah Nansteel**, *Sister Claire:* **Alexandra Sanchez**\*,  
*Sister Antoine:* **Esther Tonea** †, *Sister Catherine:* **Chea Kang**\*,  
*Sister Felicity:* **Mikayla Sager** †, *Sister Gertrude:* **Gabrielle Beteag** †,  
*Sister Alice:* **Jesslyn Thomas**, *Sister Valentine:* **Anne-Marie MacIntosh** †,  
*Sister Anne of the Cross:* **Elisa Sunshine** †, *Sister Martha:* **Buffy Baggott**,  
*Sister St. Charles:* **Courtney Miller**

*Officials of the Municipality, Officers, Policemen, Prisoners, Guards, Townsfolk*

\*San Francisco Opera debut † Current Adler Fellow

**TIME AND PLACE:** 1789–94, during the French Revolution; Paris and Compiègne

### ACT I

**SCENE I:** The Library of the Marquis de la Force

**SCENE II:** The Parlor of the Carmelite Convent

**SCENE III:** The Workroom of the Convent

**SCENE IV:** The Infirmary

—INTERMISSION—

### ACT II

**SCENE I:** The Chapel

**SCENE II:** The Chapter Room

**SCENE III:** The Parlor

**SCENE IV:** The Sacristy

### ACT III

**SCENE I:** The Chapel

**SCENE II:** The Library of the Marquis de la Force

**SCENE III:** The Conciergerie

**SCENE IV:** Place de la Révolution

*Please keep your mask on at all times in the theater.*

# Journey of a Soul

## THE PATH OF POULENC'S HEROINE FROM FEAR TO COURAGE

BY ROGER PINES



Dorothy Kirsten as Blanche de la Force, 1957. / ROBERT LACKENBACH

**I**n the closing scene of Francis Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, the last solo voice is that of the protagonist, Blanche de la Force, praying as she walks calmly to the guillotine. I once asked Romanian soprano Virginia Zeani, who created the role, how she felt at the end of the opera. "I wasn't in tears," she said. "I was in ecstasy."

That statement speaks volumes for this incomparable work, which transports both its audience and the artists who perform it to another realm of operatic experience. At its heart is Blanche's own spiritual and emotional path, which leads ultimately to her decision to join the other Carmelites in death.

Anyone portraying Blanche faces the intimidating challenge of shaping a believable, sympathetic characterization from the character's neuroticism. The volatility of her emotions is already evident in the combination of tenderness, almost eerie distractedness, fear, and desperation that colors her behavior in the opera's first scene.

Then, once Blanche enters the Carmelite order, she encounters women who exhibit not only profound commitment to their vocation but the strength of character that she lacks.

In their different ways, the formidable Mme. de Croissy, lovable Sister Constance, zealous Mother Marie, and later Croissy's successor as prioress, warm-hearted Mme. Lidoine, all leave their mark on Blanche, Constance above all. Closest to Blanche in age, Constance hopes not only to

die young, but that she and Blanche will die together. Hearing that wish causes Blanche to lose control in an explosion of outrage. But it's another comment from Constance that gives Blanche even greater pause (and with what exquisite sweetness Poulenc sets Constance's words here, mostly in *pianissimo*): knowing of Croissy's harrowing death, Constance hints to Blanche that perhaps the prioress was dying for someone else, who would subsequently find an unexpected serenity when facing her own death.

Blanche nonetheless remains consumed not simply by fear but by what her brother calls her "fear of fear." She later tellingly describes fear as an illness; Poulenc's score indicates that this should be delivered "comme malgré elle, avec une voix presque sans timbre" ("in spite of herself, with an almost toneless voice"). In the end, fear impels Blanche to flee after the nuns' vote regarding the vow of martyrdom. Later, in her confrontation with Mother Marie, the music's hair-raising intensity makes painfully, almost unbearably vivid Blanche's paralyzing fear, as well as her shame and humiliation at now being a servant in her own house. But she transforms herself: in the final scene, when she emerges from the crowd to follow Constance to the guillotine, as the last Carmelite to die, she finds a new level of understanding and a new selflessness—indeed, a true state of grace.

Blanche is fictional, but the opera's other nuns were real: the sixteen Carmelites of Compiègne, guillotined in 1794

during the “Reign of Terror.” A book by the surviving nun, Mother Marie of the Incarnation, inspired the novel by German writer Gertrud von le Fort, *Die Letzte am Schafott* (*The Last at the Scaffold*, 1931). This, in turn, was adapted as a play, *The Song at the Scaffold* (1949) by American writer Emmet Lavery. France’s most distinguished Roman Catholic novelist of the time, Georges Bernanos, used von le Fort’s book to create a screenplay, *Dialogues des Carmélites* (published posthumously as a play in 1951). Poulenc’s opera premiered six years later, with both Bernanos and Lavery credited for the dramatic source from which the composer prepared his own libretto.

Poulenc’s only previous opera had been a one-act farce, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*. In recalling that uproarious work, many of Poulenc’s admirers were surprised by his attraction to *Dialogues*. They forgot that he’d reaffirmed his own devotion to Catholicism in 1936, after the death of a beloved friend left him devastated. By nature, Poulenc was as tormented a human being as Blanche and was prone to extreme depression. Digging deeper into himself than in any previous work, he composed *Dialogues* in a near frenzy. The strain led to a nervous collapse and time spent in a Swiss clinic, leaving colleagues and friends wondering if the opera would ever be finished.

Poulenc wrote *Dialogues* in French, but the opera’s 1957 world premiere at La Scala was performed in Italian (this was heartily approved by Poulenc, for whom audiences’ thorough comprehension of his libretto was essential). Also in 1957, the opera had its first French-language performances in Paris; the U.S. premiere in English at San Francisco Opera, notable particularly for Leontyne Price’s Lidoine, her first role with a major American company; and the television premiere on NBC, with Price reprising

her luminous portrayal. *Dialogues* returned to San Francisco Opera in 1963 and 1982. The latter revival earned considerable attention, thanks to a cast including three operatic legends closely associated with this work: Price (Lidoine), Zeani (Marie), and Régine Crespin, who’d sung Lidoine in the French premiere but was now Croissy.

Those great names, and many others throughout this opera’s performance history, remind us that the principal roles have always attracted artists of the highest order. They’ve all been eminently capable of vocal virtuosity, but that ability is set aside in *Dialogues*, where it plays no role whatever. Of course, this opera needs beautiful voices, but that’s not enough in *Dialogues*; the music serves a text that must be consistently projected with maximum specificity and interpretive intelligence. This becomes abundantly clear as scene after scene alternates seamlessly between utterly natural and unforced recitative, intense declamation, and lyrical arioso. A notable example is Blanche’s dialogue with her brother, in which he fails to persuade her to leave the order to find safety with him outside France. Throughout this deeply affecting episode, the expressive variety of Poulenc’s music—growing out of his acute responsiveness to textual nuance—stunningly reinforces Blanche’s agonized conflict between resentment and tenderness.

During the final scene, when the other nuns walk to their deaths, they sing the “Salve Regina,” which honors Mary, the mother of Christ. In following them, however, Poulenc’s Blanche—like her counterparts in von le Fort’s novel and Bernanos’s play—sings instead the doxology that ends the “Veni Creator” prayer, invoking the Creator Spirit’s descent. The “Salve Regina,” typically sung at Compline (night prayer), is very much a farewell hymn—farewell to the day (and per-

Carol Vaness as Blanche de la Force with Eric Halfvarson as the Marquis, 1982. / RON SCHERL



Carol Vaness as Blanche de la Force, 1982. / RON SCHERL



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haps life itself during the night). But in the end, the point of this story is not the final lines of the "Salve," poignant as they might be: "And after this our exile, / Show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus." It's a petition, a supplication, a request. In contrast, "Veni Creator," typically sung at anointings with oil (hence consecrations of created beings), represents not merely a song of glorification and praise to the power of God but a song of *trust* at the horrific moment in which most of us would only see the utter powerlessness of God.

Blanche's journey and the glories of Poulenc's music that support it make *Dialogues des Carmélites* a life-changing work. Open yourself to it and you'll emerge from the performance with a totally new understanding of the emotional and spiritual power that opera can offer. 🌟

*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.*

**First performance:** Milan, Teatro alla Scala; January 26, 1957.

**First performance in the United States:**

San Francisco, War Memorial Opera House; September 20, 1957.

*Dialogues of the Carmelites* has been performed in three previous seasons at San Francisco Opera. For complete information, visit [archive.sfopera.com](http://archive.sfopera.com).

**Personnel:** 24 principals, 38 choristers (offstage); **62 total.**

**Orchestra:** 2 flutes, 1 piccolo, 2 oboes, 1 English horn, 2 clarinets, 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 tuba, 1 timpani, 3 percussion, 2 harps, 1 piano, 1 celesta, 40 strings (12 first violins, 9 second violins, 7 violas, 7 cellos, 5 basses); **71 total.**

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# Overflowing Love

## FAITH IN *DIALOGUES OF THE CARMELITES*

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND DR. MARC HANDLEY ANDRUS

COURTESY OF GRACE CATHEDRAL

**W**e in the Bay Area live in one of the least religious regions of the United States (and the world, for that matter). Well over 90% of us don't attend church, mosque, synagogue, or temple regularly. And if we look at people in the under-30 category, that percentage of non-participation in religion goes even higher. Given who we are, what does *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, an opera about the deaths of a group of Roman Catholic nuns in late 18th-century France, have to say to us? I believe this important opera continues to direct our hearts towards love and sacrifice, as it did when first created, and has expanded to reflect our world today—one we know as deeply interconnected and still with need for the miraculous. This commentary explores the dynamic, wherein the Beloved Community is healed through love.

The religious landscape of the 1950s was far different, even in San Francisco, than it is today. When *Dialogues of the Carmelites* had its U.S. premiere in 1957, you could still use religious terms like “Main Line Christians” and it would have some currency in conversation. Religious language and practice cropped up in schools and other formally secular spaces with regularity.

The cultural shock waves of the 1960s, however, were just around the corner. Georges Bernanos, who wrote the play on which the libretto for *Dialogues* is based, may have been anticipating these upsets, with doomed nuns standing in for a whole religious and cultural complex that would be changed almost beyond recognition in the years and decades to come.

The content of *Dialogues of the Carmelites* is essentially theological and spiritual and expressive of a religion-steeped culture that was passing. Within that mid-century religious structure, fading as it was, were two potent realities that have grown and evolved since then: The idea of a world interconnected by love (then called the Communion of Saints), and a path for healing wounded souls by means of sacrifice for the other.

While both spiritual concepts are expressed in *Dialogues* in terms of strict Christian doctrine, they can now be seen in a broader context. The Communion of Saints has evolved to a new incarnation as the Beloved Community—a community that embraces all of life, not only the saints of the Catholic Church. Awakened hearts within the Beloved Community have the power to heal by

the offering of their own life force for the sake of the wounded; not only can saintly nuns mystically heal the fearful and broken, all have this capability.

The Communion of Saints at the time of *Dialogues* was likened to a body, all the parts connected to all others. The breath and blood of this sacred and immense body was a particular kind of love: *agape*, a Greek word that is often translated as “unconditional love,” “sacrificial love,” or, as I translate it, “overflowing love.” *Agape* love is now seen to be a universal, a cosmic force, at work everywhere, and with everyone.

The second spiritual concept found in *Dialogues* is even more striking and more fearsome than that of the Beloved Community. While I might wish to be a healer, if I have even a glimmer of awareness, I see that healing isn't something objective but is costly, requiring an outpouring of my love, my life. *Dialogues* presents this idea through the figures of two nuns, one historical and one fictional. The fictional sister, Blanche de la Force, is presented as a timid person, who hopes to escape the Terror in Revolutionary France by taking refuge in the Carmelite convent. To our surprise, however, Blanche goes to her death calmly, courageously, full of faith.

The Mother Superior, Mme de Croissy, a historical figure, is almost the opposite character from that of the novice

Blanche. The Mother Superior is self-assured and grounded; she is a leader to be looked to and trusted. Yet, contrary to our expectations, she goes to her death racked with fear. What has happened to account for these surprising reversals? Bernanos, suggests a bold spiritual equation: The Mother Superior has already died Blanche's death. Or, put another way, she has taken on Blanche's fear, healed her of this fear so that Blanche could die a good death.

While not taking away from the cost that self-sacrifice entails, it is crucial to say that loss and pain do not have the last word. *Agape* may be best understood as not only sacrificial love but overflowing love because this kind of love originates in the Divine and pours forth eternally from the Divine. As St. Paul wrote in his *Letter to the Corinthians*, “Love never ends.”

*Dialogues* was not the first work of fiction to articulate this bold idea of healing by sacrificial substitution. Almost a decade before, Charles Williams—a fairly obscure editor of Oxford University Press—began to explore the idea of substitutionary love in a series of highly imaginative fantasy novels. Williams was part of a group of writers that came to be known as “The Inklings,” which included C.S. Lewis, author of the Narnia series, and J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

In Williams' hands, substitutionary love is already not the property of any one faith or religion. In the novel



Martin Luther King, Jr., 1966.  
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## THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

The Beloved Community is a community not only in which all are included and all are at peace with one another but also in which each being is connected to every other being. For Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK), it meant that each part of the whole itself suffers when even the smallest, seemingly most insignificant part suffers:

“We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.”

—From MLK's Letter from the Birmingham Jail

“But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. The type of love that I stress here is not *eros*, a sort of esthetic or romantic love; not *philia*, a sort of reciprocal love between personal friends; but it is *agape* which is understanding goodwill for all men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. It is the love of God working in the lives of men. This is the love that may well be the salvation of our civilization.”

—From *the Role of the Church in Facing the Nation's Chief Moral Dilemma*, 1957



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**“Dialogues has an urgent message for us today,  
a message that takes the two themes of the  
Communion of Saints (the Beloved Community)  
and substitutionary love as they have been transformed in  
the decades since the San Francisco premiere, and offers them  
to us, to apply to wounds of the world and of our own lives.”**

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*Descent into Hell*, Pauline is a modern young woman, not particularly religious with respect to external practices, but a person with a purity of heart and a disposition towards compassion. Her sacrificial, overflowing love works to ease the death of one of her ancestors, who died a fiery martyr's death hundreds of years before Pauline's time.

That *agape* love has the power to heal across time and space may seem a dubious concept. Clergyman and activist A.J. Muste, who put his life on the line many times during protests for workers in the early 20th century, witnessed to the power of *agape* in this way:

If the ultimate expression of violence is killing the opponent, the 'aggressor,' the ultimate expression of nonviolence or soul force is quite as obviously the willingness and ability to die ... [on behalf of another]. The pacifist must be ready to pay that price ... The suffering need not be sought. Indeed it must not be. Martyrdom for the sake of martyrdom is suicide by exhibitionism, not redemptive [sacrifice]. But we may not seek to evade suffering. It must be voluntarily accepted. The model for accepting such sacrifice is passion and death ... **Then God has entered into history and its course has been forever changed. Here is released the power which in the political and social realm is the counterpart of the fission of the atom and the release of atomic energy in its realm** [emphasis mine].

*Dialogues* has an urgent message for us today, a message that takes the two themes of the Communion of Saints (the Beloved Community) and substitutionary love as they have been transformed in the decades since the San

Francisco premiere, and offers them to us, to apply to wounds of the world and of our own lives.

Healing and being healed is vividly before us today. We witness healthcare providers working tirelessly in COVID wards before vaccines afforded protection, firefighters literally jumping ahead of flames, and countless voices calling for change when those on the margins become scapegoats—all these are moments of choice when we can be agents of compassion or recipients of healing, drawing on overflowing love. It is likely that most of these courageous people don't consciously intend to be healers, and almost certainly they don't imagine that they might be agents of spiritual transformation as presented in *Dialogues* and *Descent into Hell*, yet the opera has shown us that the possibility is there.

There are so many reasons to attend the opera. One reason is to nurture our own imaginations, to expand our own sense of what is possible. Let me close with this quotation attributed to Samuel Taylor Coleridge: “What if you slept, and what if in your sleep you dreamed, and what if in your dream you went to heaven, and there plucked a strange and beautiful flower, and what if, when you awoke, you had that flower in your hand? Ay, what then?”

Let me suggest that two flowers we might pick from the heavenly garden that is *Dialogues of the Carmelites* are an understanding of the Beloved Community, the community of all life held together by overflowing love, and the possibility of healing within the world by means of our willingness to accept the burdens of others. When we leave the opera, carrying these flowers, “Ay, what then?” 🌸

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*The Rt. Rev. Dr. Marc Handley Andrus is the eighth bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California. As Bishop of California, Andrus' leadership focuses on key issues related to peace and justice, including immigration reform, civil rights for LBGTQ+ persons, health care, and climate change.*

# Artist Profiles

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



**EUN SUN KIM**  
(Seoul, South Korea)  
**Conductor**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** *Rusalka*;  
*Tosca*; *Fidelio*; *Eun Sun Kim Conducts*

*Verdi*; *Antony and Cleopatra*

**Recent and Upcoming:** Caroline H. Hume Music Director of San Francisco Opera (*La Traviata*, *Madame Butterfly*, *100th Anniversary Concert*); *La Bohème* (Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, Milan's Teatro alla Scala); *Tosca* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *Salome* (Houston Grand Opera); *Turandot* (Houston); *Roberto Devereux* (LA Opera); *Verdi Requiem* (Dutch National Opera); concerts with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic. Principal Guest Conductor of Houston Grand Opera  
Instagram: @ESKConductor



**MICHAELA SCHUSTER** \* † ‡  
Soprano (Fürth, Germany)  
**Mme. de Croissy**  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Mme. de Croissy in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Vienna State Opera); Herodias in *Salome* (Vienna); Amme in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Baden-Baden); Concert performances (Berlin Philharmonie); Klytemnestra in *Elektra* (Metropolitan Opera)



**MICHELLE BRADLEY** \* † ‡  
Soprano (Versailles, Kentucky)  
**Mme. Lidoine**  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Title role of *Aida* (Metropolitan

Opera; Fort Worth Opera, Savonlinna Opera Festival, Prague State Opera, San Diego Opera, Nancy); title role of *Tosca* (San Diego, Lyric Opera of Chicago); Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* (Japan's Hyogo Performing Arts Center, Tanglewood, Santiago); Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Hollywood Bowl, San Francisco Symphony); *Verdi Requiem* (Deutsche Oper Berlin, Baltimore Symphony); *Liù* in *Turandot* (Metropolitan Opera); Leonora in *Il Trovatore* (Vienna State Opera); Leonora in *La Forza del Destino* (Frankfurt); recitals and concerts (San Diego Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Dallas Symphony)

Facebook: @MichelleBradleySoprano  
Instagram: @themichellebradleysoprano



**MELODY MOORE** † ‡ †  
Soprano (Dyersburg, Tennessee)  
**Mother Marie**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** Title role of *Tosca*; Susan

Rescorla in Christopher Theofanidis' *Heart of a Soldier*; Mimi in *La Bohème*; Countess Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Amneris in *Aida* (Los Angeles Opera, Houston Grand Opera); Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Houston, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra); Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (Houston); Gertrude in *Hänsel und Gretel* (LA Opera, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra); title role of *Salome* (Daegu South Korea, Florida Grand Opera); Tatyana in *Eugene*

*Oegin* (Hawaii Opera Theatre); Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* (Washington National Opera); Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Minnesota Orchestra); Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied* (Houston Symphony Orchestra); Delius' *A Mass of Life* (Grant Park Music Festival)  
Adler Fellowship Program 2006, 2007  
Merola Opera Program 2005



**DEANNA BREIWICK** \* † ‡  
Soprano (Seattle, Washington)  
**Sister Constance**  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Adele in *Die Fledermaus* (Munich's Bavarian

State Opera); Drusilla in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, Zurich Opera); Cunegonde in *Candide* (Atlanta Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera); Nannetta in *Falstaff* (Munich); Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Munich); Najade in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Metropolitan Opera); Amore in *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Seattle Opera); Bradamante and Pittura in Luigi Rossi's *Il Palazzo Incantato* (Lorraine Opera, Royal Opera of Versailles, Dijon Opera); Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel* (Michigan Opera Theatre); Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Opera Omaha); Norina in *Don Pasquale* (Berkshire Opera Festival)  
Instagram: @deannabreiwick  
Facebook: @deannabreiwick soprano



**HEIDI STOBER** † ‡  
Soprano (Berlin, Germany)  
**Blanche de la Force**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:**

Zdenka in *Arabella*; Angelica in *Orlando*; Johanna in *Sweeney Todd*; Norina in *Don Pasquale*; Magnolia

ARTIST PROFILES CONTINUED

Hawks in *Show Boat*; Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*; Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera*; Nannetta in *Falstaff*; Atalanta in *Xerxes*; Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Eva in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Deutsche Oper Berlin); Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (Berlin, Japan's Hyogo Performing Arts Centre); Micaëla in *Carmen* (Berlin, Houston Grand Opera); Mother/Waitress 2/Sphinx 1 in Turnage's *Greek* (Berlin); Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Berlin); Despina in *Così fan tutte* (Hamburg Opera, Metropolitan Opera); Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Semperoper Dresden); Mahler's Second Symphony (Philharmonie Berlin); Handel's *Messiah* (Boston Baroque); Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* (Dresden); Dalinda in *Ariodante* (Chicago); Antigone in Enescu's *Oedipe* (Dutch National Opera); Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* (Berlin); Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Berlin)  
 Twitter: @HeidiStober



**DALE TRAVIS** ◊  
 Bass-Baritone  
 (Harleysville, Pennsylvania)  
**Marquis de la Force**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** Sacristan

in *Tosca*; Benoit/Alcindoro in *La Bohème*; Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*; Baron Douphol in *La Traviata*; Dr. Kolenatý in *The Makropulos Case*; Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Frank in *Die Fledermaus* (Japan's Seiji Ozawa Music Academy); Doc in *West Side Story* (Glimmerglass Festival); Dr. Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville* (Glimmerglass); British Major in *Silent Night* (Glimmerglass); Nonancourt in Nino Rota's *The Straw Hat* (Minnesota Opera); Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* (Santa Fe Opera); Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola* (Atlanta Opera, Virginia Opera)

Adler Fellowship Program 1988, 1989  
 Merola Opera Program 1986, 1987



**BEN BLISS** ♪  
 Tenor (New York, New York)  
**Chevalier de la Force**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*

**Recent and Upcoming:** Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu); Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* (Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Frankfurt Opera); Pylade in *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Rouen Opera); Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress* (Metropolitan Opera); Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* (Metropolitan Opera); Robert Wilson in *Doctor Atomic* (Santa Fe Opera)  
 Facebook: @BenBlissTenor  
 Instagram: @mrbenbliss  
 YouTube.com/user/MrBenBliss



**BRENTON RYAN** ♪  
 Tenor (Sedalia, Missouri)  
**Chaplain**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** Janek in *The Makropulos Case*;

Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; Eros in *Antony and Cleopatra*; Monsieur Triquet in *Eugene Onegin*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Pedrillo in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Monte-Carlo Opera); Missail in *Boris Godunov* (Munich, Metropolitan Opera); Second Jew in *Salome* (Munich); Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* (London's Royal Opera Covent Garden, Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago); Loge in *Das Rheingold* (Dallas Opera); Spoletta in *Tosca* (Metropolitan Opera); Dancing Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos*

(Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera); Nero in *The Coronation of Poppea* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis); Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Opera Philadelphia); John Wormley in Matthew Aucoin's *Crossing* in concert (LA Opera)



**CATHERINE COOK** ♪ ◊  
 Mezzo-Soprano (Daly City, California)  
**Mother Jeanne**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:**  
 Over 350

performances in over 50 productions, including Jade Boucher in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*; title role of Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*; Mrs. McClean in *Susannah*; La Frugola in *Il Tabarro*; Berta in *The Barber of Seville*; Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; Mother Bailey in Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Julia Child in Lee Hoiby's *Bon Appetit!* (Sun Valley Music Festival, Opera Parallèle); Mamma Lucia in *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Opera Colorado) Frederica Von Stade Distinguished Chair in Voice (San Francisco Conservatory of Music)  
 Adler Fellowship Program 1991, 1992  
 Merola Opera Program 1990



**TAYLOR RAVEN** ♪ +  
 Mezzo-Soprano  
 (Hope Mills, North Carolina)  
**Sister Mathilde**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** Charmian

in *Antony and Cleopatra*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Flora in *La Traviata* (San Francisco Opera); Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* (Houston Grand Opera, LA Opera); Mallika in *Lakmé* (Washington Concert Opera); Moravec's *Sanctuary Road* (North Carolina Opera); world premiere of a song cycle

## ARTIST PROFILES CONTINUED

commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (Urban Arias); Annio in *La Clemenza di Tito* (LA Opera); Tebaldo in *Don Carlo* (LA Opera); Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Wolf Trap Opera, Finger Lakes Opera); Concepción in *L'Heure Espagnole* (Wolf Trap)  
Merola Opera Program 2016  
Instagram: @taylorelaineraven



**EFRAÍN SOLÍS** ♪ ♠  
Baritone (Santa Ana, California)  
**Jailor/M. Javelinot/Thierry**  
**San Francisco Opera**

**Highlights:** Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*; Dandini in *La Cenerentola*

**Recent and Upcoming:** Title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Opera San José); Germano in *La Scala di Seta* (Opera Santa Barbara); Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Hawaii Opera Theatre); Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* (Utah Opera); Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Opera Southwest); Escamillo in Peter Brook's *La Tragédie de Carmen* (Utah Opera); Jose Martinez Barajas' *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* (New York City Opera) Adler Fellowship Program 2014, 2015 Merola Opera Program 2013  
Website: efrainsolis.com  
Instagram: @solisef



**CHRISTOPHER OGLESBY** ♪ ♠  
Tenor (Woodstock, Georgia)  
**1st Commissioner**  
**San Francisco Opera**

**Highlights:** Dancaïre in *Carmen*; Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet*; Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut*; Jaquino in *Fidelio*

**Recent and Upcoming:** Boris in *Kát'a Kabanová* (West Edge Opera); Tybalt in

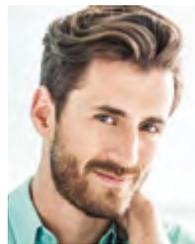
*Romeo and Juliet* (Utah Opera); Handel's *Messiah* (Utah Symphony); Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress* (Merola Opera Program)

Adler Fellowship Program 2019, 2020, 2021

Merola Opera Program 2018

Facebook: @oglesbytenor

Instagram: @oglesbytenor



**HADLEIGH ADAMS** ♪ ♠  
Baritone (Wellington, New Zealand)  
**2nd Commissioner/1st Officer**  
**San Francisco Opera**

**Highlights:**

Schaunard in *La Bohème*; Angelotti in *Tosca*; Luther and Schlemil in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*; Mr. Fox in *Dolores Claiborne*; Paris in *Romeo and Juliet*; Arthur Jones in *Billy Budd*; Agrippa in *Antony and Cleopatra*

**Recent and Upcoming:** Stanley in André Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Florida Grand Opera); Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* (San Diego Opera, Cincinnati Opera); Hawkins Fuller in Gregory Spears' *Fellow Travelers* (Florida Grand Opera, Minnesota Opera); La Bête in Philip Glass' *La Belle et la Bête* (Opera Parallèle); Doug in Joby Talbot's *Everest* (Opera Parallèle); Paul in Glass' *Les Enfants Terribles* (Opera Parallèle); title role of Jonathan Dove's *The Enchanted Pig* (Australian Contemporary Opera Company); Jake Heggie's *If I Were You* (Merola Opera Program); Vicomte de Valmont in Luca Francesconi's *Quartett* (West Edge Opera); Carl Magnus in Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* (Nederlandse Reisopera)  
Adler Fellowship Program 2013, 2014  
Merola Opera Program 2012  
Instagram: @nz\_hads



**DEBORAH NANSTEEL** +  
Mezzo-Soprano (Havelock, North Carolina)  
**Mother Gerald**  
**San Francisco**

**Opera Highlights:** Madame Larina in *Eugene Onegin*

**Recent and Upcoming:** Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Metropolitan Opera); Mother in Scott Davenport Richards' *Blind Injustice* (Cincinnati Opera); Annina in *La Traviata* (Metropolitan Opera); Amneris in *Aida* (Opera Grand Rapids); Gertrude in *Hansel and Gretel* (New Orleans Opera); Mother Abbess in *Suor Angelica* (Opera Omaha); Paula in *Florenzia en el Amazonas* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Azucena in *Il Trovatore* (Toledo Opera, Opera Tampa in concert); Sally in Kevin Puts' *The Hours* (Philadelphia Orchestra); Rosswisse in *The Valkyries* (Los Angeles Philharmonic); Filipyevna in *Eugene Onegin* (Santa Fe Opera); Suzuki in *Madame Butterfly* (Chicago) Merola Opera Program 2011



**ALEXANDRA SANCHEZ** ♪ ♠  
Mezzo-Soprano (San Antonio, Texas)  
**Sister Claire**  
**Recent and Upcoming:**

Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*; Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*; The Old Maid in Menotti's *The Old Maid and the Thief*; concert with violinist Joshua Bell (Festival Napa Valley); concert with soprano Lisette Oropesa (Louisiana State University)  
Instagram: @alexandratsanchez

ARTIST PROFILES CONTINUED



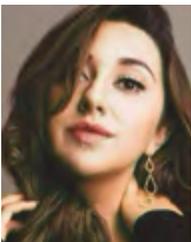
**ESTHER TONEA** ♪+  
Soprano (Buford, Georgia)  
**Sister Antoine**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** Flower/Lady-in-

Waiting in *Dream of the Red Chamber*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Diana in Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *If I Were You* (Merola Opera Program); Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* (Merola Grand Finale); Callie Van Lew in Jake Heggie's *Intelligence* (workshop)  
Winner of Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition 2022  
Adler Fellowship Program 2020, 2021, 2022  
Merola Opera Program 2019



**CHEA KANG** \*♪  
Soprano (Deokso, South Korea)  
**Sister Catherine**  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Servilia in *La Clemenza di Tito*

(San Francisco Conservatory of Music); Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare* (SFCM); Cubans in Paris (New York Festival of Songs)



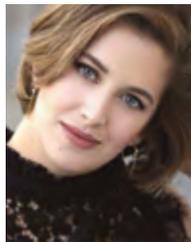
**MIKAYLA SAGER** ♪+  
Soprano (Vancouver, Canada)  
**Sister Felicity**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** *Eun Sun*  
*Kim Conducts Verdi*

**Recent and Upcoming:** Giannetta in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Festival Napa Valley); Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* (Highlands Opera); Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito* (Teatro Nuovo); *Back Home: Through the Stage Door* (Merola Opera Program)  
Adler Fellowship Program 2022  
Merola Opera Program 2021  
Instagram: @mikaylasagersoprano  
Twitter: @mikayla\_sager



**GABRIELLE BETEAG** ♪+  
Mezzo-Soprano (Atlanta, Georgia)  
**Sister Gertrude**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:**

Flower/Lady-in-Waiting/Solo Maid in *Dream of the Red Chamber*; Iras in *Antony and Cleopatra*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Mercédès in *The Threepenny Carmen* (Atlanta Opera The Big Tent); Woman in a Hat/Duchess in John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*  
Winner of Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions 2020  
Adler Fellowship Program 2022  
Merola Opera Program 2021



**JESSLYN THOMAS** ♪  
Mezzo-Soprano (Rindge, New Hampshire)  
**Sister Alice**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** First

Bridesmaid in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; Madrigal Singer in *Manon Lescaut*; Mrs. O'Malley in Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *It's a Wonderful Life*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Currently a member of San Francisco Opera Chorus; Soprano soloist in Mozart's Requiem and Brahms' Requiem (UC Berkeley Chorus and Orchestra)



**ANNE-MARIE MACINTOSH** ♪+  
Soprano (Langley, B.C., Canada)  
**Sister Valentine**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:**

Marzelline in *Fidelio*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Micaëla in *Carmen* (Opera San José); Diane in Jake Heggie's *If I Were You* (Merola Opera Program); Coloratura in Claude Vivier's

*Kopernikus* (Against the Grain Theatre)  
Adler Fellowship Program 2020, 2021, 2022  
Merola Opera Program 2019



**ELISA SUNSHINE** ♪+  
Soprano (San Clemente, California)  
**Sister Anne of the Cross**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** A

shepherd boy in *Tosca*; Flower/Lady-in-Waiting in *Dream of the Red Chamber*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Annina in *La Traviata* (San Francisco Opera); Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* (Pensacola Opera); Selena in Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *If I Were You* (Merola Opera Program); Marie in *La Fille du Régiment* (Merola Grand Finale); Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel* (Regina Opera); Musetta in *La Bohème* (Regina Opera); Elizabeth Christine in Scott Wheeler's *The Sorrows of Frederick* (Center for Contemporary Opera)  
Adler Fellowship Program 2020, 2021, 2022  
Merola Opera Program 2019



**BUFFY BAGGOTT** ♪  
Mezzo-Soprano (Fair Oaks, California)  
**Sister Martha**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Highlights:** Flosshilde in *Das Rheingold*;

Second Secretary to Mao in John Adams' *Nixon in China*; Queen Hecube in *Les Troyens*; Maria in Marco Tutino's *Two Women*; Giovanna in *Rigoletto*  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Member of San Francisco Opera Chorus; alto soloist in Verdi Requiem (San Francisco Choral Society Davies Symphony Hall)

ARTIST PROFILES CONTINUED



**COURTNEY MILLER** ♪  
Mezzo-Soprano  
(Madison, Wisconsin)  
**Sister St. Charles**  
**Recent and Upcoming:** Member of San Francisco

Opera Chorus; Olga in *Eugene Onegin* (Florida Grand Opera); Mercédès in *Carmen* (Florida Grand Opera); Hannah in Mieczystaw Weinberg's *The Passenger* (Detroit Opera); Meg in Mark Adamo's *Little Women* (Madison Opera); Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Opera Saratoga); Mrs. Ford in Vaughan Williams' *Sir John in Love* (Odyssey Opera)  
Instagram: @mezzomiller  
Website: courtneyallycemiller.com



**OLIVIER PY** \*\*  
(Grasse, France)  
**Production Designer**  
**Recent and Upcoming:** *Ma Jeunesse Exaltée* (Festival d'Avignon);

*Wozzeck* (Greek National Opera); *Les Huguenots* (Brussels' Théâtre de la Monnaie); *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* (Deutsche Oper Berlin); *Thaïs* (Milan's Teatro alla Scala); *La Voix Humaine*/Thierry Escaich's *Point d'Orgue* (Théâtre des Champs-Élysées); *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Dutch National Opera); *La Gioconda* (Brussels); *La Traviata* (Malmö Opera); *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Basel's Théâtre de Bâle); *Lohengrin* (Brussels) Director of Festival d'Avignon (2013–2022)



**DANIEL IZZO** \*\*  
(Orléans, France)  
**Revival Director**

**Recent and Upcoming:** Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* (Brussels' La Monnaie); *Dialogues of the Carmelites*

(Brussels, Paris' Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Bologna Opera, Toulouse's Théâtre du Capitole); *Manon* (Paris' Opera Comique); *Lohengrin* (Brussels); *La Traviata* (Malmö Opera House); *La Gioconda* (Brussels); *Wozzeck* (Athens Opera); *La Voix Humaine* (Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Bordeaux, Saint-Etienne); *Pikovaya Dama* (Nice Opera, Toulon Opera)  
Facebook: @daniel.izzo

**PIERRE-ANDRÉ WEITZ** \*  
(Bussang, France)  
**Production Designer**

**Recent and Upcoming:** Production designer: *Boris Godunov* (Toulouse's Théâtre du Capitole); *Le Rossignol/Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (Paris' Théâtre des Champs-Élysées); *Henry VIII* (Brussels' La Monnaie/De Munt); *Madame Butterfly* (Athens' Greek National Opera)  
Director: Lehár's *Giuditta* (Strasbourg)



**BERTRAND KILLY** \*  
(Turckheim, France)  
**Lighting Designer**  
**Recent and Upcoming:**

*Lucia di Lammermoor* (Basel); *La Traviata* (Malmö);

Olivier Py's *L'Amour Vainqueur* (Avignon); *Lohengrin* (Brussels); *La Gioconda* (Brussels); *La Dame de Pique* (Nice); *Woyceck* (Athens); *La Voix Humaine* (Paris); Thierry Escaich's *Point d'Orgue* (Paris); *Siegfried* (Nantes); *Thaïs* (Milan); *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* (Berlin); *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (Paris); *Henry VIII* (Brussels); *Boris Godunov* (Toulouse); Lehár's *Giuditta* (Strasbourg); Offenbach's *Orphée aux Enfers* (Lausanne); *Madame Butterfly* (Athens)



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

*the Red Chamber*; *Eun Sun Kim*  
Conducts Verdi; *Antony and Cleopatra*; *Eugene Onegin*

**Recent and Upcoming:** San Francisco Opera Chorus Director (*La Traviata*, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*)

Seattle Opera Head of Music Staff and Chorus Master (*La Bohème*, *Die Walküre*, Jonathan Dove's *Flight*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *La Cenerentola*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Porgy and Bess*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Il Trovatore*, *Carmen*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Così fan tutte*, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, *Aida*)  
Metropolitan Opera Laffont  
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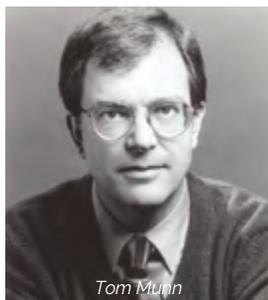


**DAVE MAIER**  
(El Cerrito, California)  
**Fight Director**  
**San Francisco Opera**  
**Opera Highlights:**

*Carmen*; *Tosca*; the *Ring*; *Pagliacci*; *Rigoletto*; *Romeo and Juliet*; *Billy Budd*; *Manon Lescaut*

**Recent and Upcoming:** *La Traviata* (San Francisco Opera); *Orpheus and Eurydice* (San Francisco Opera); *West Side Story* (Opera San José); *Richard II* (African American Shakespeare Company); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Stanford University); *The Tempest* (Oakland Theater Project); *Romeo y Juliet* (Cal Shakes); *Fefu and Her Friends* (American Conservatory Theatre)

# Lighting Design Edition



Tom Munn

*San Francisco Opera's resident lighting director since 2018, Justin A. Partier, interviewed legendary lighting designer Tom Munn last May, a few weeks before Munn's passing after a long battle with cancer. Munn was the Company's lighting designer from 1976 until 2001, returned as a guest designer, and was named emeritus lighting designer. The two shared stories and shed light on how lighting designers approach tricky productions to create brilliant effects and unforgettable stage pictures. To listen to their conversation and for a full transcript, visit Streaming the First Century, San Francisco Opera's free online hub for historic recordings, conversations, and more at [sfopera.com/firstcentury](http://sfopera.com/firstcentury).*

**Justin Partier:** Tom, it's great to have you here! How did you first get into theater and opera and lighting as a whole? Where did you start?

**Tom Munn:** I got interested in lighting in high school back in Connecticut. We had a regular theater with a fly loft and lighting positions. The major manufacturing in town was General Electric, and they were making dimmers at that time. They put in a big auto transformer board with all the interlocking mechanisms and whatnot, so I got interested in that and decided I wanted to pursue it in college. My parents were not so excited about me going into a theater program initially. They wanted me to get a "general education," so I started at St. Michael's College in Winooski, Vermont. I chose that mainly because I was a skier. (laughter)

**JP:** That's a good excuse, right?

**TM:** I managed to get on the ski team and got a free pass to Stowe, Vermont for the season. I practically failed my first year of college because I was on the slopes the whole time! (laughter) I did Summer Stock and transferred to Boston University as a result and then studied at BU with some greats at the time: [costume designer] Horace Armistead, [theater designer] Raymond Sovey, and various people from New York. BU didn't have a lighting design program, per se, which was a benefit to me because I got to light everything! I got to sort of pick and choose shows that I wanted to do.

**JP:** It's a little trial by fire, 'cause you're a kid learning how to light shows. You get to make the mistakes, right?

**TM:** Yeah. And then I basically supported myself scene painting and finally got a break and did a couple of off-



*Sherrill Milnes as Athanaël and Beverly Sills as Thais, 1976.  
RON SCHERL*

Broadway and dance shows in New York and then did a couple of Broadway shows. None of them succeeded. (laughter) I got a lot of furniture for my apartment, because every time a show closed they would say, "Come take what you want!"

**JP:** So how did you get from that to San Francisco?

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**TM:** I was doing a lot of industrial shows [and Master Electrician] George Pantages recommended me to come to the Opera. I interviewed with [then San Francisco Opera General Director] Kurt Adler and with several people and got the job. I thought it was crazy. (laughs) I mean, I'd only done two operas.

**JP:** I tell this story about my first opera, growing up in San Francisco and New York. My first opera was *La Bohème*, I think it was '93, and walking in and seeing this grandiose set ... . I'd done small theater in high school and college. Seeing that totally changes your perspective of what you can do scenically and [with] lighting to really improve upon the art form, you know? I just remember sitting there being completely in awe that you can turn on one light and completely change the way the set looks. That blew my mind.

**TM:** Or from what direction.

**JP:** What direction, or what color, or if it somehow skims scenery in a beautiful way to do a sunrise.

Going back to your first season, there was one show in particular that sort of stuck out, which was the *Thaïs* [1976, the Company premiere of Massenet's opera]. Can you tell me about that?

**TM:** It was the first show that I was doing from scratch here—by that I mean that I was actually involved from the conception. It was a really challenging design because it was a surround of mirrors that were motorized and articulated and could change position. It had two amoeba-shaped platforms and they could change position onstage. Each one could rotate individually, or they could interlock and become one unit. Well, it all had to be done by hand (they were not computerized at that point), and we finally gave up with moving them *a vista* in front of the audience, and we did them at scene changes. It was really tricky.

Not only that but the director wanted the lighting isolated to the platforms. Well, if the platforms are constantly moving, and you don't have moving lights (laughter) and he says, "No, no, it's gotta be three feet to the left" ...

**JP:** Then all of a sudden you have to refocus. (laughter)

**TM:** ... and you know you haven't got the time to refocus!

**JP:** Right.

**TM:** The other thing was bouncing the light off the mirrors. I found that because I had limited space to put equipment between the mirrors and they were always moving, the mirrors were the one thing that was actually getting in the same position all the time. So I could just bounce a light off a mirror! There was a scene that had a huge mirror over the bed, and this was completely boxed in with mirrors around the whole stage, and the bed is raised off the floor (laughter) and she's sitting back in the bed. I said there's no way ... and I tried everything to get light in. Finally I just resorted to the balcony rail. And it was fine!

**JP:** Sometimes the artistry is there, and you just have to embrace the things that may not be the right logical way to get there, but you get there. And, you can, as an artist, step back and say, "Oh, look at this great thing that I've discovered. I'm going to put that in my brain for the next time I have to do a show with a mirror!"

**TM:** Right. (laughter) What [show sticks out for you] so far?

**JP:** The *Fidelio* we just did [October 2021]. A big rotating set with mirrors on it is a very challenging show, on top of the storytelling being very challenging. I was the co-designer with JAX Messenger. He couldn't be here, so I ended up lighting. And it was ...

**TM:** And it was spectacular. It really was.

**JP:** Oh, thank you. It was really hard. (laughs) I had never done a show with mirrors as a designer. I'd done it as an assistant, but I'd never done it as a designer, and in that first act, the curtain goes up and you can see everyone, but how do you light it? We didn't want light to hit the mirrors. We wanted to keep all the light off of it and still use follow spots. It looked beautiful, but getting there ... !

**TM:** I think my biggest challenge was *William Tell* on a raked floor that had mirrors running up and downstage, against a projection screen. I finally convinced them to cut holes in the mirrors at the bottom so I could get some kind of side lighting in.

**JP:** I see a theme happening: challenges with mirrors! (laughter) 🍷



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 Chester Pidduck  
 Laurel Porter  
 Taylor Raven\* ^  
 Johan Reuter  
 Brenton Ryan  
 Mikayla Sager ^ †  
 Alexandra Sanchez\*  
 Kindra Scharich  
 Michaela Schuster\*  
 Taylor See  
 Nadine Sierra + ^  
 Philip Skinner + ^  
 Efrain Solis + ^  
 Karah Son\*  
 Whitney Steele  
 Nina Stemme  
 Heidi Stober  
 Elisa Sunshine ^ †  
 Jonathan Tetelman\*  
 Jesslyn Thomas  
 Esther Tonea ^ †  
 Dale Travis + ^  
 Yaritza Véliz\*  
 Denis Véliz  
 Ethan Vincent  
 Alfred Walker  
 Linda Watson\*  
 Melody Wilson  
 Pretty Yende\*  
 Meigui Zhang ^

## CONDUCTORS

Vassilis Christopoulos\*\*  
 Roberto Kalb\*  
 Eun Sun Kim  
 Sir Donald Runnicles  
 Peter Whelan\*\*

## PRODUCTION

Robert Carsen  
 David Hockney  
 Olivier Py\*\*

## STAGE DIRECTORS

Jose Maria Condemí  
 Daniel Izzo\*\*  
 Shawna Lucey  
 Lorena Maza\*  
 Peter McClintock  
 Amon Miyamoto\*  
 Matthew Ozawa  
 Elkhanah Pulitzer  
 Roy Rallo  
 Miroku Shimada\*

## CHOREOGRAPHERS

Serge Bennathan\*  
 Rena Butler\*  
 John Heginbotham  
 Colm Seery

## SET DESIGNERS

Jorge Ballina\*  
 David Hockney  
 Boris Kudlička  
 Mimi Lien\*  
 Alexander V. Nichols

## COSTUME DESIGNERS

Ian Falconer  
 Constance Hoffman  
 Jessica Jahn  
 Eloise Kazan\*  
 Kenzō Takada\*

## LIGHTING DESIGNERS

Fabio Antoci\*  
 Christine Binder  
 Alan Burrett\*  
 Michael Clark  
 David Finn  
 Bertrand Killy\*  
 Yuki Nakase Link\*  
 Justin Partier  
 Victor Zapatero\*

## PRODUCTION DESIGNERS

Michael Levine  
 Pierre-André Weitz\*  
 Robert Innes Hopkins

## VIDEO/PROJECTION DESIGNERS

Bartek Macias  
 Bill Morrison\*  
 Alexander V. Nichols

## SOUND DESIGNER

Mark Grey

## SOLO DANCERS

Alysia Chang  
 Brett Conway  
 Jamielyn Duggan  
 Marian Luna Faustino  
 Blanche Hampton  
 Marissa Maislen  
 Micah Moch  
 Christopher Nachtrab  
 Jekyln Peláez  
 Ciharu Shibata  
 Maxwell Simoes  
 Bravita Threatt  
 Marcos Vedovetto

\* San Francisco Opera  
 Debut

\*\* U.S. Debut

+ Former Adler Fellow

† Current Adler Fellow

^ Former Merola Opera

Program participant

Cover Artist

# Chorus

John Keene, *Chorus Director*

Fabrizio Corona, *Associate Chorus Master*

## REGULAR CHORUS

Nadima Avakian	Angela Eden Moser
Buffy Baggott*	Sally Mouzon
Elizabeth Baker	Sally Porter Munro †
Kathleen Bayler	Erin Neff
C. Michael Belle	William O'Neill
William Lee Bryan*	Andrew Thomas Pardini*
Janet Campbell	Rachelle Perry
Alan Cochran	Phillip Pickens
Sara Colburn	William Pickersgill
Clare Demer	Chester Pidduck
Anders Fröhlich	Laurel Cameron Porter
Patrick Hagen	Valery Portnov
Daniel Harper	Fernando Ruiz
Christopher Jackson	Carole Schaffer
Michael Jankosky*	Sigmund Seigel †
Silvie Jensen	Jonathan Smucker
Wilford Kelly	Whitney Steele
Claire Kelm	Nicole Takesono
Bojan Knežević	Jesslyn Thomas*
Elisabeth Rom Lucio	Jere Torkelsen
Liesl McPherrin	Andrew Truett
Courtney Miller*	

† Chorus member on leave of absence

\* Solo Role

## EXTRA CHORUS

Jennifer Brody	Sally Porter Munro
Cheryl Cain	Aimée Puentes
Katie Carlson Cartwright	Leandra Ramm
Kelly Clarke	Clifton Romig
Margaret Genovese	Kindra Scharich
Kevin Gino	Alexander Taite
Harlan Hays	Michael Taylor
Glenn Healy	Igor Vieira
Carolyne Anne Jordan	Jacque Wilson
David Kekuewa	Daniel Yoder
Adam Lowe	
Eileen Alonso Meredith	
Jim Monios	

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.

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local 16

Theatrical Wardrobe Union, Local 784, I.A.T.S.E.

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

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

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

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



# Orchestra

Eun Sun Kim, *Music Director*

## FIRST VIOLIN

Kay Stern, *Concertmaster*  
Laura Albers, *Associate Concertmaster* †  
Heidi Wilcox,  
*Acting Associate Concertmaster* +  
Jennifer Cho,  
*Acting Assistant Concertmaster*  
Dawn Harms  
Mariya Borozina  
Barbara Riccardi  
Dian Zhang  
Leonid Igudesman  
Jennifer Hsieh  
Asuka Annie Yano  
Wenyi Shih ^  
Robin Hansen ^

## SECOND VIOLIN

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

## VIOLA

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

## CELLO

Thalia Moore, *Acting Principal*  
Peter Myers,  
*Acting Associate Principal* +  
Nora Pirquet,  
*Acting Assistant Principal*  
Emil Miland  
Victoria Ehrlich †  
Ruth Lane  
Eric Sung ^  
Mark Votapek ^

## BASS

Joseph Lescher, *Principal*  
Jonathan Lancelle,  
*Associate Principal* +  
Steven D'Amico,  
*Assistant Principal*  
Shinji Eshima  
Evan Hillis ^

## FLUTE

Julie McKenzie, *Principal*  
Michelle Caimotto ^  
Stephanie McNab +

## PICCOLO

Stephanie McNab

## OBOE

Mingjia Liu, *Principal* †  
Gabriel Young, *Acting Principal*  
Alex DiThomas ^  
Benjamin Brogadir ^

## ENGLISH HORN

Alex DiThomas ^  
Benjamin Brogadir ^

## CLARINET

Jose Gonzalez Granero, *Principal*  
Joanne Burke Eisler,  
*Assistant Principal* †  
Matthew Boyles ^  
Anthony Striplen †  
Junghwan Lee ^

## BASS CLARINET

Anthony Striplen †  
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 +  
Meredith Brown ^  
Logan Bryck ^  
Caitlyn Smith-Franklin ^

## TRUMPET

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

## TROMBONE

Samuel Schlosser, *Principal*  
Jeffrey Budin ^  
David Ridge

## BASS TROMBONE

David Ridge, *Principal*

## TUBA/CIMBASSO

Zachariah Spellman, *Principal*

## TIMPANI

John Burgardt, *Principal*

## PERCUSSION

Richard Kvistad,  
*Principal/Associate Timpani* †  
Patricia Niemi, *Acting Principal*  
Victor Avdjenko ^

## HARP

Annabelle Taubl ^

## LIBRARIAN

Carrie Weick

## ADDITIONAL MUSICIANS

Andrew King, *Piano & Celesta*

## ORCHESTRA MANAGER

Tracy Davis  
Kevin Myers,  
*Orchestra Operations Manager*

† = Leave of absence

+ = Principal for one or more

^ = Season Substitute

^ = Season Substitute

# Corps Dancers

Colm Seery, *Dance Master*

Alice Cao  
Alysia Chang  
Brett Conway ^  
Jamielyn Duggan ^  
Alexandra FitzGibbon  
Blanche Hampton ^  
Bryan Ketron ^  
Rachel Speidel Little ^  
Beth Maslinoff  
Jackie McConnell  
Christopher Nachtrab ^  
Jekyns Peláez ^  
Maxwell Simoes  
Chiharu Shibata ^  
Marcos Vedovetto

^ Tenured

# Supernumeraries

Sadie Black	Ansel Klucsor	Anthony Sabedra
Bruce Bowen	Andrew Korniej	Fernando Sanchez-Riera
Jim Bowes	Steve Lavezzoli	Pablo Sanfrancisco
Mark Burstein	Sherman Lee	Doug Spradlin
Feliciana Marie Casas	William Liu	Mimi Timberlake
Guerrero	Alan LoFaso	Ross Uchimura
Rick Casse	Priscilla Lore	Domonique Williams
Stacey Chien	Holly MacCormick	Irving Wiltshire
Thomas Colletta	Gilbert Martinez	Laurel Winzler
Eric Dew	Tim McCormick	Alliana 'Lili' Yang
Joe Friedman	Lynn Meinhardt	Atom Young Maguire
Joe Giammarco	Steve Mullin	Viva Young Maguire
Darius Gray	Ivan Navarro	Paul Zemlin
Karsten Guthridge	Ron Niewiarowski	Frank Zepeda
Nancy Huie	Ely Orquiza	
Larry Kern	Ram Ramayanam	

# Backstage Personnel

## COSTUME SHOP

Jai Alltizer (22),  
*Costume Shop Manager*  
Galen Till (18),  
*Senior Production Supervisor*  
Cassandra Carpenter,  
*Production Supervisor*  
Manuel Gutierrez (23),  
*Production Coordinator*  
Sally Thomas (23),  
*Master Tailor*  
Amy Ashton-Keller (29),  
*Master Draper*  
Barbara Ebel (14), *Senior Draper*  
Santiago Suanes (13), *Men's Draper*  
Abdiel Portalatin Perez, *Draper*  
Paula Wheeler (31), *Senior Milliner*  
Amy Van Every (38), *Senior Draper*  
Andrea Phillips, *Assitant Dyer*  
Jersey McDermott (23),  
*Senior Craftsperson/Shoe Specialist*  
Kelly Koehn, Ed Fonseca,  
*Kathy Roberts, Craftpersons*  
Emma Lehman, Kristen Tracy (15),  
*Assitant Cutters*  
Nika Cassaro, Taylor Newell,  
*Kaitlyn Patrick, First Hand*  
Robyn Marsh, Victoria Mortimer,  
*Costume Assistants*

## COSTUME TECHNICIANS

Miriam Acosta (25), Karla Fix,  
Hoa Fong (24), Gillian Haratani (11),  
Yui Takenouchi, Ashley Granbow,  
Sabrina Baladad-Perez,  
Katherine Stein, Katherine Griffith,  
Haoyu Yao, 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 (24),  
Edward Fonseca (11),  
Claudia Holaday (43),  
Lorraine Lewis (10),  
Barbara Nicholas (24),  
Rachell Nichols,  
Phil Perry (25),  
Patrick Sanchez (13),  
Don Smith (26),  
Scott Stewart (22),  
Grisel Torres,  
Kirsten Tucker (19)

## DRESSERS

Paula Barish, Kathleen Blake (10),  
John Goldsmith, Thomas Hoffman,  
Andrew Koch, Michael Kruzich,  
Jeffery Larsen, Jennifer O'Neill (10),  
Mark Saladino, Janice Stephenson,  
Mary Still, Charles Sullivan,  
Anastasia Todish, Grisel Torres,  
Arleen Young

## WIG, HAIR, AND MAKEUP DEPARTMENT

### SENIOR WIG ARTISTS

Maur Sela  
Erin Hennessy

### WIG ARTISTS

Tori Grayum  
Lindsay Saier

### SHOW CALL FOREPERSONS

Karalynne Fiebig,  
Consuelo Lopez-Robbins,  
Christina Martin, Sharon Peng,  
Sophia Smith

### PRINCIPAL AND SHOWCALL WIG, HAIR, AND MAKEUP ARTISTS

Shana Astrachan, Juliette Bernal,  
Melanie Birch, Vanessa Blanchard Lee,  
Kristen Campbell, Calli Carvajal,  
Sarah Coy, Karalynne Fiebig,  
Marisela Garcia, Dulce Gastelum,  
Denise Gutierrez, Erin Hennessy,  
Arina Izadi, Roxie Jonson,  
Kendall Krouse, Consuelo Lopez-Robbins,  
Amber Loudermilk, Letzy Lugo,  
Christina Martin, Toby Mayer,  
Jessica Mayeux, Robert Mrazik,  
Gloria Mueller, Leilani Norman,  
Lisa Patnoe, Sharon Peng,  
Maurisa Rondeau, Lindsay Saier,  
Tim Santry, David Searle, Maur Sela,  
Sophie Smith, Erica Villanueva,  
Kimberly Virgen, Lisa Zomer

### SCENE SHOP

Amy Broussard, Dennis Forry,  
Joel Morgante, Jesse Hazzard,  
Christian Martinez, Dylan Maxson,  
Scott Whitten, Jeff Palmer,  
Loren Patterson, Michael Ramirez,  
James Ryan, Eila Saarni,  
Victor Sanchez (25), Angelo Montague,  
Frederick Wielandt (25)

### SCENIC ART DEPARTMENT

Lauren Abrams, Jennifer Bennes,  
Wayne Olds, Debbie "Vola" Ruben

## CARPENTRY DEPARTMENT

Michael Accurso (32),  
*Night Crew Foreman*  
Dominic Casazza (19), *Assitant Key Flyman*  
Gabriel Castellani (12), *Automation Key*  
Michael Chapman (10), *Key*  
Dennis Criswell  
Paul Delatorre (23), *Key*  
Greg Harsha (23), *Key*  
Geoffrey R. Heron (16)  
Geoffrey W. Heron (28), *Key*  
Philip Heron, (20),  
*Automation and Rigging Foreman*  
Ed Joe, *Warehouse Foreman*  
Nick Kukielka  
Michael Martino  
Alex Meyer (28)  
Ethan Ng  
Harry Niedzwetzki (30)  
John O'Donnell, *Key Flyman*  
Enrique Pronio  
Michael Ramirez  
Ty Russell  
Bartholomew Ryan  
James Ryan  
Kenneth Ryan (40)  
Michael Ryan  
Eila Saarni  
Gregory Shaff (34), *Key*  
Cyrus Sindicich  
Sean Walden (11)  
Randy Walsh (20), *Assistant Key*  
Collin Whitfield  
Sammy Wong

## PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Scott Barringer (22), *Key*  
Christy Carter  
James Eldredge (18), *Shop Mechanic*  
Hilary Engelman  
Andy Falkner  
Oris Fry  
Patricia Hewett (15), *Assistant Key*  
Myron Seth Isaacs (22), *Key*  
Mark Kotschnig (20), *Key*  
John Matlock, *Assistant Key*  
Beth Ozarow (26), *Out of House Key*  
Noah Peacock  
Tara Pellack  
Dawn Roth-Golden  
Gretchen Scharfenberg  
Sarah Shores (15), *Shop Mechanic*  
Morgan Womble-Dahl

## ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT

Eugene Ahn, *Gel Room*  
Juan Aldana (18)  
Rebecca Bernal  
John Boatwright (35),  
*House Head Electrician*  
Ariel Bott, *Assistant Key Stage Left*

Erik Docktor (15), *Projection Programmer*  
Amy Domjan, *Layout Electrician*  
Stephen Echerd (19)  
Will Grunig (20)  
Robert Haycock, *Key Stage Right*  
Ana Gabriela Hernandez-McKig  
Geoff Heron (13), *Pyro Technician*  
Bernard Honigman (23),  
*Key Light Board Operator*  
Karen Jine  
Brendan Kierans, *Electric Shop Foreman*  
Sophie Landau  
Sonia Martinez  
Maria Mendoza (34), *Projection Coordinator*  
Glenn Quilici, *Assistant Key Stage Right*  
Kevin Quintero  
Matthew Reynolds  
William Rodriguez  
Kirt Siders, *Data Administrator*  
Andrew Sproule (23), *Key Stage Left*  
Jax Steager,  
*Assistant Key Light Board Operator*

## AUDIO DEPARTMENT

Emad Dajani  
Christine Dumke  
Deanne Franklin  
Kimberly Griess, *Key*  
Kevin McKereghan  
Ryan Napoli  
Tod Nixon, *Key* (24)  
Billy Schmidt

## MEDIA DEPARTMENT

Jennie Clark  
Chris Dulmage  
Steven Gianfermo  
Michael Hanchett  
Bob Hines  
Mitchell Kell, *Video Editor*  
Elliott Rice  
Brian Shimetz  
Uwe Willenbacher (14), *Audio Editor*

## STUDIO TEACHERS

Donnell Barnes  
Carolyn Crimley  
Dana Gray  
Lua Hadar  
Karen Kindig  
Victoria Northridge

## WRANGLERS

Sadie Black  
Liz Pasha  
Diana Young

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

# San Francisco Opera Orchestra



**Kay Stern**  
Concertmaster



**Laura Albers**  
Associate  
Concertmaster



**Heidi Wilcox**  
Acting Associate  
Concertmaster



**Jennifer Cho**  
Acting Assistant  
Concertmaster



**Dawn Harms**  
First Violin



**Mariya Borozina**  
First Violin



**Barbara Riccardi**  
First Violin



**Dian Zhang**  
First Violin



**Leonid Igudesman**  
First Violin



**Jennifer Hsieh**  
First Violin



**Asuka Annie Yano**  
First Violin



**Wenyi Shih**  
First Violin  
*Regular Substitute*



**Robin Hansen**  
First Violin  
*Regular Substitute*



**Jeremy Preston**  
Principal  
Second Violin



**Martha Simonds**  
Associate Principal  
Second Violin



**Beni Shinohara**  
Assistant Principal  
Second Violin



**Eva Karasik**  
Second Violin



**Leslie Ludena**  
Second Violin



**Maya Cohon**  
Second Violin



**Craig Reiss**  
Second Violin



**Heeguen Song**  
Second Violin  
*Regular Substitute*



**Carla Maria Rodrigues**  
Principal  
Viola



**Joy Fellows**  
Acting Associate  
Principal, Viola



**Patricia Heller**  
Viola



**Jonna Hervig**  
Viola



**Natalia Vershilova**  
Viola



**Elizabeth Prior**  
Viola  
*Regular Substitute*



**Thalia Moore**  
Acting Principal  
Cello



**Peter Myers**  
Acting Assistant  
Principal, Cello



**Nora Pirquet**  
Acting Assistant  
Principal, Cello



**Emil Miland**  
Cello



**Victoria Ehrlich**  
Cello



**Ruth Lane**  
Cello



**Eric Sung**  
Cello  
*Regular Substitute*



**Joseph Lescher**  
Principal  
Bass

**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ORCHESTRA CONTINUED**



**Jonathan Lancellle**  
Associate Principal  
Bass



**Steven D'Amico**  
Assistant Principal  
Bass



**Shinji Eshima**  
Bass



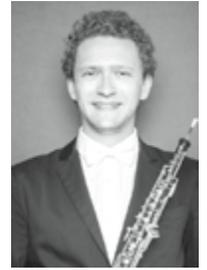
**Julie McKenzie**  
Principal  
Flute



**Stephanie McNab**  
Flute & Piccolo



**Mingjia Liu**  
Principal  
Oboe



**Gabriel Young**  
Acting Principal  
Oboe



**Jose Gonzalez Granero**  
Principal Clarinet



**Joanne Burke Eisler**  
Assistant Principal  
Clarinet



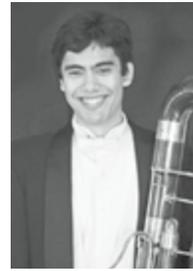
**Anthony Striplen**  
Clarinet &  
Bass Clarinet



**Rufus Olivier**  
Principal  
Bassoon



**Daniel MacNeill**  
Bassoon



**Michael Severance**  
Bassoon &  
Contrabassoon



**Kevin Rivard**  
Principal  
Horn



**Keith Green**  
Horn



**Brian McCarty**  
Associate Principal  
Horn



**Adam Luftman**  
Principal  
Trumpet



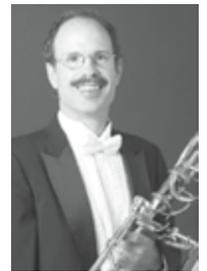
**John Pearson**  
Trumpet



**Scott Macomber**  
Trumpet  
*Regular Substitute*



**Samuel Schlosser**  
Principal Trombone



**David Ridge**  
Principal  
Bass Trombone



**Zachariah Spellman**  
Tuba/Cimbasso



**John Burgardt**  
Timpani



**Richard Kvistad**  
Principal Percussion &  
Associate Timpani



**Patricia Niemi**  
Acting Principal  
Percussion



**Tracy Davis**  
Orchestra Manager



**Carrie Weick**  
Librarian

*Most photos by John Martin.*

*Not pictured: Emily Liu (Viola), Yi Zhou (Viola), Mark Votapek (Cello), Evan Hillis (Bass), Michelle Caimotto (Flute), Benjamin Brogadir (Oboe), Alex DiThomas (Oboe), Shawn Jones (Bassoon), Matthew Boyles (Clarinet), Junghwan Lee (Clarinet), Meredith Brown (Horn), Caitlyn Smith-Franklin (Horn), Logan Bryck (Horn), Jeffrey Budin (Trombone), Victor Advienko (Percussion), Annabelle Taubl (Harp), Kevin Myers (Assistant Orchestra Manager and Librarian)*

# San Francisco Opera Regular Chorus



**Nadima Avakian**  
Soprano



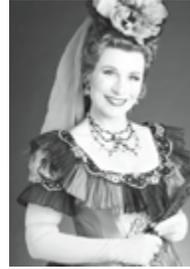
**Kathleen Bayler**  
Soprano



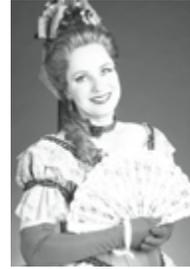
**Sara Colburn**  
Soprano



**Clare Demer**  
Soprano



**Claire Kelm**  
Soprano



**Elisabeth Rom Lucio**  
Soprano



**Liesl McPherrin**  
Soprano



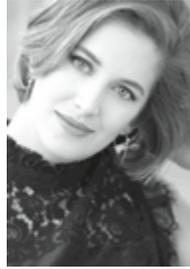
**Angela Eden Moser**  
Soprano



**Rachelle Perry**  
Soprano



**Carole Schaffer**  
Soprano



**Jesslyn Thomas**  
Soprano



**Buffy Baggott**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Elizabeth Baker**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Janet Campbell**  
Mezzo-Soprano



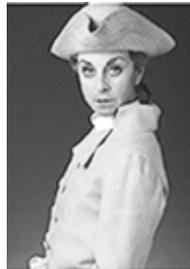
**Silvie Jensen**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Courtney Miller**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Sally Mouzon**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Sally Porter Munro**  
Mezzo-Soprano  
*Leave of Absence*



**Erin Neff**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Laurel Cameron Porter**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**Nicole Takesono**  
Mezzo-Soprano



**C. Michael Belle**  
Tenor



**Alan Cochran**  
Tenor



**Patrick Hagen**  
Tenor



**Daniel Harper**  
Tenor



**Christopher Jackson**  
Tenor



**Michael Jankosky**  
Tenor



**Phillip Pickens**  
Tenor



**Chester Pidduck**  
Tenor



**Fernando Ruiz**  
Tenor



**Sigmund Seigel**  
Tenor  
*Leave of Absence*



**Jonathan Smucker**  
Tenor



**Andrew Truett**  
Tenor



**William Lee Bryan**  
Baritone



**Anders Fröhlich**  
Baritone



**Andrew Thomas Pardini**  
Baritone



**Jere Torkelsen**  
Baritone



**Wilford Kelly**  
Bass



**Bojan Knežević**  
Bass



**William O'Neill**  
Bass



**William Pickersgill**  
Bass



**Valery Portnov**  
Bass

*Not pictured: Whitney Steele, Mezzo-Soprano*

*Most photos by John Martin.*

*Carole Schaffer by Pamela Dale and Jonathan Smucker by Lisa Keating.*

## San Francisco Opera Corps Dancers



Jamielyn Duggan



Brett Conway



Blanche Hampton



Bryan Ketron



Rachel Speidel Little



Christopher Nachtrab



Jekyns Peláez



Chiharu Shibata

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VISIONARY PHILANTHROPY.

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To learn more about becoming a sponsor or making an additional gift in honor of the Centennial Season, please contact **Chief Philanthropy Officer Lisa Bury** at [lbury@sfoera.com](mailto:lbury@sfoera.com) or **(415) 551-6226**.

Photo: Cory Weaver (Meistersinger, 2015-16 Season)

# 2022 Adler Fellows

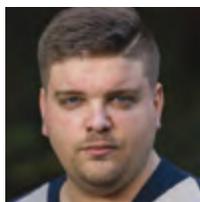
As Adler Fellows, emerging singers and pianists receive rigorous individualized coaching as well as opportunities to cover and perform roles in main stage performances. **Our Adler Friends and Sponsors play a vital role in their training, nurturing the talent and creativity of these budding artists and ensuring they reach their full potential as part of the program.** We are extremely grateful for our Friends of Adler and Adler Sponsor support received between August 1, 2021 and September 27, 2022. For more information about sponsorship opportunities, please call **Hannah Dworkin at (415) 565-3260.**



Mezzo-Soprano  
**GABRIELLE BETEAG**  
Atlanta, Georgia  
First-year Adler  
Sponsored by  
Peggy & Boyce Nute



Baritone  
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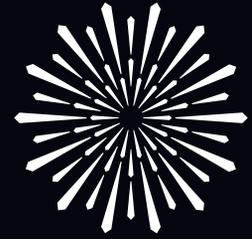
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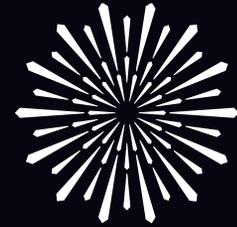
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# On Glimpsing the Sublime

BY GENERAL DIRECTOR MATTHEW SHILVOCK

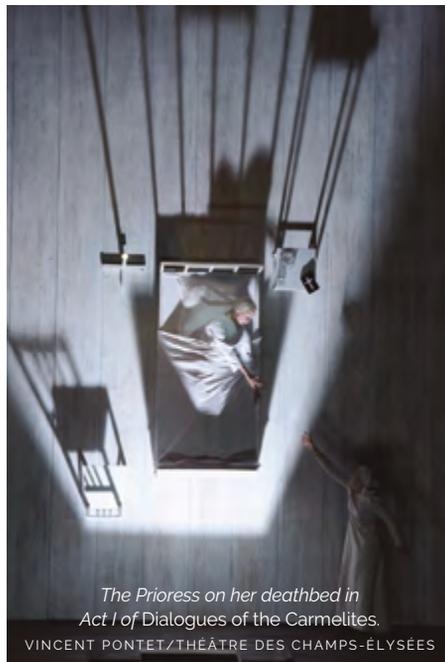
In June this year, our group of Instigators gathered in person for the very first time. This is a group of six creative visionaries from outside the world of opera, working with us to envision new directions for the artform. We posed the question of “what defines opera?” and the conversation turned to the “sublime.” I’ve thought about this word a great deal since that conversation and opera’s ability to take us beyond our rational, measured understanding of the world. How often have we felt that opera takes us to states of mind otherwise out of reach? The multi-sensory nature of this artform can result in a transmigration out of reality in which we get to glimpse the sublime.

The sublime is a state much more complex than beauty or joy; in fact, the 18th century philosopher Edmund Burke talked of terror being a source of the sublime, and in this we come to the sublime in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Poulenc has an extraordinary ability to take his characters, and us by extension, to places beyond ourselves. We see the sublime through the lens of terror at the end of Act I when the Prioress dies a tortured death, one so terrible that Sister Constance believes her death was meant for someone else. And we see the sublime at the end of the opera where the community of nuns goes to the guillotine, resolved in sorority to confront the fear of death. The Prioress’ death is one of anguish, the other deaths are of religious affirmation, but in both we glimpse the spiritual sublime.

I am reminded of other examples of the spiritual sublime in opera, including one seen on our stage twenty years ago with Messiaen’s *Saint François d’Assise*. At the start of the opera, Saint Francis makes clear that a perfect



KRISTEN LOKEN



The Prioress on her deathbed in Act I of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. VINCENT PONTET/THÉÂTRE DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES

joy will result from enduring all suffering (visit our *Streaming the First Century* website to listen to excerpts). The second is Kaija Saariaho’s *L’amour de loin* in which a pilgrim tires of the hedonism of life and yearns for an idealized love. The third is Wagner’s *Parsifal* in which the grace of Parsifal’s wisdom finally releases the perpetual terror of Amfortas’ pain.

In each of these operas we glimpse the sublime through a lens of spiritual ecstasy (as opposed to erotic ecstasy in a work like Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*), each composer—Messiaen, Saariaho, Wagner—quite literally torquing time to allow us access to something beyond the rational. In *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Poulenc does this with an exquisite purposefulness, voices hovering over the orchestra in layers of spiritual reflection. His music creates an aural cloister, free of anything extraneous, both intimate and spacious at the same time.

Reflecting on the sublime, Burke wrote that “When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are, delightful, as we every day experience.” In Poulenc’s musical spaciousness, he gives us that distance in which to engage with the complex intersection of fear, faith, and resolve. There is maybe no greater exemplar of the sublime rendered in music than the final scene of *Dialogues of the Carmelites* in which the terror of death, punctuated by the jarring blade of the guillotine, opens up into a sublimity of grace. We hold both states of terror and grace in unity and in doing so we glimpse the sublime. 🌿

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