



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA GUILD

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD'S *AN EVENING ON THE STAGE* BENEFIT
HONORS FREDERICA VON STADE AND JAKE HEGGIE

Annual Event Held on the War Memorial Opera House Stage
Amid the Setting for *La Traviata*



Frederica von Stade and Jake Heggie; *An Evening on the Stage*; Heggie, von Stade, Catherine Cook (Drew Altizer Photography)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (December 2, 2022) — San Francisco Opera Guild's *An Evening on the Stage* gala dinner honored mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade and composer Jake Heggie on Tuesday evening, November 29, at the War Memorial Opera House. Von Stade and Heggie each received The Crescendo Award, bestowed by the Guild upon individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary support to the Guild and San Francisco Opera.

Now in its ninth year, the sold-out benefit presented by San Francisco Opera Guild offered 275 guests the opportunity to dine on the War Memorial Opera House stage, surrounded by the set of the Company's acclaimed, new production of Verdi's *La Traviata*.

Frederica von Stade continues to be extolled as one of the music world's most beloved figures. Known by her nickname "Flicka," the mezzo-soprano has enriched the world of classical music for over five decades. Her long and distinguished history with San Francisco

Opera began in 1971 (Spring Opera Theater) as Sesto (*La Clemenza di Tito*), returning the following year for her mainstage debut in the role with which she is famously associated, Cherubino (*Le Nozze di Figaro*). Over the decades she has returned in a wide range of repertoire, from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *La Cenerentola* to *Der Rosenkavalier*, to the creation of roles in new works such as Conrad Susa's *The Dangerous Liaisons* and Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*. She is devoted to her work with local organizations, including Oakland's St. Martin de Porres elementary school, the Young Musicians Choral Orchestra and the People's Choir of Oakland.

Composer and pianist Jake Heggie's acclaimed works include the San Francisco Opera world premiere commission *Dead Man Walking* (libretto by Terrence McNally) and co-commissions *Moby-Dick* (libretto by Gene Scheer), *It's a Wonderful Life* (Scheer) and *Three Decembers* (Scheer). He served as the Company's first Composer-in-Residence from 1998–2000, which led to his first opera, *Dead Man Walking* (2000) in which von Stade created the role of Joseph de Rocher's mother. In addition to nine full-length operas and numerous one-acts, Heggie has composed nearly 300 art songs, as well as concerti, chamber music, choral and orchestral works.

San Francisco Opera Guild President Maryam Muduroglu, who San Francisco Mayor London N. Breed just announced as the city's new Chief of Protocol, noted: "Music and art can have transformative influences in the lives of children. Self-expression, empathy, self-esteem, collaboration, global curiosity, compassion, critical thinking, sense of purpose, these are all the life-long skills we strive to foster in the thousands of students we reach every year throughout the greater Bay Area. Each of the performers tonight, including Jake and Flicka, were inspired by a mentor, experience or program that ignited a spark to help them discover and explore their passions. That's why we do what we do, and why we are so grateful to Flicka and Jake for being such inspiring mentors and such extraordinary supporters of our mission."



Young Musician's Choral Orchestra members Max Nguyen (left) and Israel Rangel (right) with Frederica von Stade; San Francisco Opera Guild Opera Scouts; *An Evening on the Stage* co-chairs Lisa Zabelle (left) and Afie Royo (right) with San Francisco Opera Guild President Maryam Muduroglu (Drew Altizer Photography)

Co-chaired by Afie Royo and Lisa Zabelle, *An Evening on the Stage* included a cocktail reception in the War Memorial Opera House foyer, followed by dinner, musical performances and dancing on the Opera House stage. Musical guests included San Francisco Opera Guild's Opera Scouts, students from the Young Musician's Choral Orchestra, mezzo-soprano Catherine Cook and performances by the guests of honor, Frederica von Stade accompanied by Jake Heggie. Event stylist and frequent *Opera Ball* designer J. Riccardo Benavides reunited with San Francisco Opera Guild for this event and McCalls Catering & Events created a sumptuous dinner. The Cheeseballs provided the music for the dance floor.

Guests in attendance included event Honorary Chair and past honoree Diane B. Wilsey; San Francisco Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock and General Director Emeritus David Gockley; President of the Board of Trustees of the San Francisco War Memorial & Performing Arts Center Tom Horn; and past stage dinner honorees Carol Doll, Pitch Johnson and Dianne and Tad Taube.

Tickets for the sold-out *An Evening on the Stage* event were priced from \$1,500 through \$10,000. Proceeds support San Francisco Opera Guild's innovative education programs that reach thousands of students in the Bay Area each year.

Previous *An Evening on the Stage* honorees include Charlotte Mailliard Shultz, Diane B. Wilsey, Gordon Getty, Franklin P. ("Pitch") Johnson, Jr., Dianne and Tad Taube, Cynthia and John Gunn, Carol and Dixon Doll and the Littlefield Family.

An Evening on the Stage is made possible through the generous support of presenting sponsor Neiman Marcus Union Square; supporting sponsors Denise Littlefield Sobel, John

and Cynthia Fry Gunn, TriplePoint Capital, Accenture, First Republic Bank and Timothy Allen Chocolates; wine sponsors Roederer Estate, Castellucci Napa Valley and Rigg Estate Vineyards; and media sponsors: Haute Living San Francisco, Luxury Trending and Nob Hill Gazette. Special thanks to Drew Altizer Photography, Soirée Valet and The Cheeseballs.

ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

Founded in 1939, San Francisco Opera Guild is an opera education organization in Northern California. Its mission—“to give voice to potential”—reinforcing the social emotional benefits of the arts for all ages in forward-thinking, philanthropic programming committed to fostering the future of opera and musical arts. San Francisco Opera Guild is responsible for some of the most prestigious events on the Bay Area’s philanthropic calendar, including partnering with San Francisco Opera on the season-opening *Opera Ball* benefit. The Guild’s education programs reach thousands of arts lovers of all ages in K-12 classrooms and after school programs, as well as employing opera experts to share the beauty of this art form through the Opera Previews series, workshops and school outreach for children as young as kindergarten. For more information about San Francisco Opera Guild and its programming, please visit sfopera.com/Opera-Guild.

##

For further press information and event photos, please visit sfopera.com/press or contact San Francisco Opera Communications:

Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / jmcmillan@sfopera.com

Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / tconcepcion@sfopera.com