



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA GUILD

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD'S *AN EVENING ON THE STAGE*
HONORS KAREN J. KUBIN AND MARY & BILL POLAND

Tenth Anniversary of Benefit Held on the War Memorial Opera House Stage



An Evening on the Stage (Drew Altizer Photography)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (November 14, 2023) — San Francisco Opera Guild's *An Evening on the Stage* gala dinner honors Karen J. Kubin and Mary and Bill Poland on Tuesday, November 28 at the War Memorial Opera House. The honorees will receive The Crescendo Award, bestowed by the Guild upon individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary support to the Guild and San Francisco Opera.

Celebrating its tenth anniversary, the black-tie benefit presented by San Francisco Opera Guild offers over 250 guests the opportunity to dine on the historic War Memorial Opera House stage, where since 1932 operatic legends like Luciano Pavarotti, Leontyne Price and Renée Fleming have performed. The evening's décor will include the set from Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*. The new production of the delightful romantic comedy, which begins a six-performance run on November 19, is set during the 1950s in the Italian Riviera.

HONOREES



(photo: Kristen Loken)

Karen J. Kubin served as president of San Francisco Opera Guild from 2012 to 2014. Presently, she is a member of the Board of Directors of San Francisco Opera Association, where she also serves on the Association's Executive Committee and as its secretary. Recently retired from Morrison & Foerster LLP after 46 years of illustrious law practice, Kubin won a number of groundbreaking employment class and other complex actions, earning her multi-year recognition as one of California's top employment lawyers for the results she achieved for her management-side clients.

In addition to her service to San Francisco Opera, Karen J. Kubin sits on the Board of Directors of OPERA America. She is a former member of the Board of Trustees of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, which she also served on the Conservatory's Executive Committee and as its secretary and chair of the Audit Committee. She is an associate director of San Francisco Opera Guild and a former board member of the San Francisco Girls Chorus.

Kubin is a tireless supporter of today's youth, mentoring them both professionally and personally, and a passionate advocate of music education, blending this interest with her philanthropic activities through her board service and in other ways. In particular, she supports the San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship Program and Merola Opera Program, where many young artists have launched brilliant operatic careers, including several she has proudly sponsored.



(photo: Drew Altizer
Photography)

Mary Poland has served on the San Francisco Opera Guild Board since 1983, and she held the position of president from 2018 to 2020. She is an active philanthropist and leader who believes in equitable access to arts, higher education and public lands. Her charitable support is both generous and strategic; she truly enjoys being a role model for volunteerism. To ensure the Guild's education programs' longevity, she regularly mentors Guild directors on fundraising and development.

With 40 years of board leadership experience, Mary Poland currently sits on the board of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music,

NatureBridge, the Buck Institute Advisory Council and the NorCal Advisory Council for Georgetown University. Previous experience includes the Board of Regents and Executive Council at Georgetown University, San Francisco Education Fund Advisory Council, The Marin Art and Garden Center, Pivot Learning Partners and San Francisco Opera.

Mary Poland graduated from the University of Washington with an accounting degree. She relocated to San Francisco to begin a successful career at KPMG and later moved on to marketing and finance at GATX Leasing Corporation.

Bill Poland graduated from Georgia Tech with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and served as president of his senior class and president of Sigma Nu. He received an MBA from Stanford Graduate School of Business and work at The Rouse Company, Coldwell Banker and Cabot, Cabot & Forbes before founding the Bay West Group in 1979 which has grown to include three subsidiaries: Bay West Development Services, Bay West Development Company and BlueWave Express Car Wash Company. He believes it is essential to involve and engage the younger generation in professional and philanthropic work.

Bill Poland is chairman emeritus and member of the Board of Trustees for The Buck Institute for Research on Aging, past chairman of San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau, past president of The Olympic Club and past councilmember of the Town of Ross. He sits on the Georgia Tech Presidents Advisory Board, the Urban Land Institute and the Board of the Streers Global Real Estate Center at Georgetown University. He is a member of The Meadow Club and The Olympic Club and was elected to the Hall of Fame for the Guardsmen and The Olympic Club Foundation. In 2010 he received the NAIOP—Lifetime of Building Award.



The Cheeseballs, San Francisco Opera Guild Opera Scouts (Drew Altizer Photography)

Co-chaired by Jane Mudge and Celeste Lee-Bobroff, *An Evening on the Stage* includes a cocktail reception in the War Memorial Opera House foyer, followed by dinner, musical performances, presentation of the 2023 Crescendo Awards and dancing on the Opera House stage. Musical guests include San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows tenor Moisés Salazar, soprano Olivia Smith and pianist Marika Yasuda; San Francisco Opera Guild's Opera Scouts and pianist Ronny Michael Greenberg. Event stylist and frequent *Opera Ball* designer J. Riccardo Benavides reunites with San Francisco Opera Guild for this event and McCalls Catering & Events crafts a sumptuous dinner. The Cheeseballs will provide the music for the dance floor.

Co-Chair Jane Mudge remarked, "Celeste and I are thrilled to co-chair the event's 10th anniversary celebration. The concept of an intimate evening on the stage of the Opera House has evolved into an extraordinary successful annual event for San Francisco Opera Guild. We are grateful that each year our guests respond to the event with generous enthusiasm as we gather to honor important supporters of the Guild, promote our mission of youth education in music, celebrate the close of a successful fall opera season and kick off the holidays.

Co-chair Celeste Lee-Bobroff added. "This year's honorees, Karen J. Kubin and Mary and Bill Poland, are legends within San Francisco Opera Guild, San Francisco Opera Association and the greater Bay Area community, having lent their unwavering time, treasure and talent over many decades. Our honorees have also mentored countless individuals near and far through their professional and philanthropic affiliations. Karen, Mary and Bill ... Bravi!"

Expected guests include event 2022 Honorary Chair and past honoree Diane B. Wilsey; San Francisco Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock and General Director Emeritus David Gockley; Chief of Protocol for San Francisco Maryam Muduroglu; President of the Board of Trustees of the San Francisco War Memorial & Performing Arts Center Tom Horn; and past stage dinner honorees Carol and Dixon Doll, Pitch Johnson, Tad and Dianne Taube, Frederica von Stade and Jake Heggie.

San Francisco Opera Guild President Courtney Labe said, "*An Evening on the Stage* is the Guild's signature holiday event and key fundraiser, helping to sustain our nationally recognized arts education programs. Our commitment to accessible music education enriches the lives of greater Bay Area youth, building life skills and developing broader perspectives."

Tickets for *An Evening on the Stage* event are priced from \$1,500 through \$10,000 (\$1,500 tickets are sold out). Proceeds support San Francisco Opera Guild's award-winning music education programs, which reach thousands of students in the greater 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, The Littlefield Family, Frederica von Stade and Jake Heggie.

An Evening on the Stage is made possible through the generous support of presenting sponsors Neiman Marcus, TriplePoint Capital and Van Cleef & Arpels; wine sponsors Castellucci Napa Valley and Scharffenberger Cellars; and media sponsors Haute Living San Francisco and Nob Hill Gazette. Special thanks to Ronny Michael Greenberg, San Francisco Opera Guild's Opera Scouts, 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.

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