

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CELEBRATES INDEPENDENCE DAY AT STERN GROVE FESTIVAL WITH A CONCERT FEATURING PATRICIA RACETTE, JOHN RELYEA, SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S ADLER FELLOWS AND THE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS CONDUCTED BY IAN ROBERTSON

"A Celebration of American Music" to Include Favorites from Copland, Bernstein, Sondheim, Sousa and More

SAN FRANCISCO (June 22, 2010) — San Francisco Opera returns to the beautiful outdoor setting of Sigmund Stern Grove on Sunday, July 4 at 2 p.m. for "A Celebration of American Music" at Stern Grove Festival, located at 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard in San Francisco. This annual admission-free concert is one of San Francisco Opera's most popular community engagements, attracting thousands of Bay Area opera lovers.

Soprano Patricia Racette and bass-baritone John Relyea, both of whom are currently starring in the Company's production of Gounod's *Faust*, will join the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus in a concert of American favorites by George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, Jerome Kern and Carlisle Floyd, among others. Both former members of the San Francisco Opera Center Adler Fellowship Program, Relyea and Racette will be joined by current Adler Fellows Susannah Biller, Leah Crocetto, Sara Gartland, Brian Jagde and Austin Kness.

San Francisco Opera Chorus Director Ian Robertson leads the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus in a program that includes orchestral and choral selections from Jerome Kern's *Show Boat* and Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land* as well as Copland's Variations on a Shaker Melody, and a fanciful arrangement of familiar songs by George M. Cohan entitled "Patriotic Fantasy." Highlights

include Patricia Racette singing "Ain't It A Pretty Night?" from Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*; John Relyea singing "Ol' Man River" from *Show Boat*; "Bess, You Is My Woman Now" from George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with Leah Crocetto and John Relyea; and "Glitter and be Gay" from Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* sung by Susannah Biller. A pre-concert lecture will take place at 12 p.m. in Stern Grove's Trocadero Clubhouse.

San Francisco Opera's performance at Stern Grove Fetival is sponsored by the Patricia Yakutis Endowment Fund and the Hendrickson Family in memory of J. Scott Hendrickson, Supernumerary.

ADMISSION AND ACCESS TO STERN GROVE FESTIVAL

All Stern Grove Festival concerts begin at 2:00 p.m. at Sigmund Stern Grove, located at 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard. All Stern Grove Festival events are ADMISSION-FREE; no tickets are required.

Stern Grove Festival is accessible by MUNI bus and metro lines and concert-goers are encouraged to use public transportation. Due to construction at St. Francis Circle, MUNI Metro service beyond West Portal Station will be impacted. Patrons can take lines K, L or S to West Portal Station, transfer to an M Ocean View Bus or K Ingleside Bus, and exit at the first stop at 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard. Patrons are advised to allow for extra travel time. Visit www.sterngrove.org for updates.

Concertgoers are encouraged to arrive early for the best lawn seating and may bring picnics, low beach chairs, and ground covers. Tall chairs, beach umbrellas, and pets are prohibited in Stern Grove during concerts. Blankets and groundcovers are restricted in size to 8x10 feet due to space limitations. Unoccupied blankets are subject to removal. Designated benches are reserved for seniors over the age of 65 and disabled persons with one guest until 30 minutes prior to concert time. To ensure the safety and comfort of patrons at each performance, the concert meadow will be closed to further entry if capacity is reached. Patrons are not guaranteed seating in the meadow.

Free shuttle service within the Grove is provided to seniors and disabled patrons and a drop-off area is located at the entrance to the park at 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard. A limited number of handicapped parking spaces are available at the 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard entrance to the park.

Picnics are welcome and food and drinks are available from the Grove Café. Festival merchandise and artist CDs are for sale at the Festival Shop. Sigmund Stern Grove is a 33-acre recreation area with meadows, picnic facilities, hiking trails, and a lake. The audience is advised to come prepared for both sun and fog.

For additional information visit the Stern Grove Festival website at *sterngrove.org* or call (415) 252-6252.

STERN GROVE FESTIVAL presents SAN FRANCISCO OPERA A CELEBRATION OF AMERICAN MUSIC

Sunday, July 4, 2010; 2 p.m.

Sigmund Stern Grove, 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard, San Francisco

Featuring Patricia Racette, John Relyea and the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus

Conducted by Ian Robertson.

With Susannah Biller, Leah Crocetto, Sara Gartland, Brian Jagde and Austin Kness

JEROME KERN: Show Boat

Overture Orchestra with Maestro Robertson

AARON COPLAND: Variations on a Shaker Melody Orchestra and Chorus

CARLISLE FLOYD: Susannah

Ain't It a Pretty Night? Patricia Racette

AARON COPLAND: The Tender Land

Stomp Your Foot! Orchestra and Chorus

CARLISLE FLOYD: Susannah

I'm Fixin' to Tell Y'Bout a Feller John Relyea, Leah Crocetto and Chorus

LEONARD BERNSTEIN: Candide

Glitter and be Gay Susannah Biller

Walk Together, Children

Traditional Spiritual, arranged by Moses Hogan Chorus

GIANCARLO MENOTTI: The Consul

To This We've Come (The "Papers Aria") Patricia Racette

LEONARD BERNSTEIN: Candide

Make Our Garden Grow Susannah Biller, Sara Gartland,

Brian Jagde, Austin Kness, Chorus

INTERMISSION

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA: The Stars and Stripes Forever Orchestra and Chorus

GEORGE GERSHWIN: Porgy and Bess

Bess, You is My Woman Now Leah Crocetto and John Relyea

STEPHEN SONDHEIM: Follies

Losing My Mind Patricia Racette

RICHARD RODGERS: Oklahoma!

Selections arranged by Russell Bennett Susannah Biller, Sara Gartland,

Brian Jagde, Austin Kness

JEROME KERN: Show Boat

Ol' Man River John Relyea

GEORGE GERSHWIN: Girl Crazy

Embraceable You Patricia Racette

GEORGE M. COHAN: Patriotic Fantasy Orchestra and Chorus

Arranged by Walter Ehret and Paul Yoder

About the Artists

Acclaimed soprano Patricia Racette proudly traces the roots of her career to San Francisco Opera, where she participated in both the Merola and Adler Fellowship Programs. She made her main-stage Company debut in 1989 as Mistress Ford in student performances of Falstaff and continues the celebration of her twentieth anniversary with San Francisco Opera this season as Marguerite in this summer's Faust, having already appeared this past fall as the three heroines of Puccini's *Il Trittico*. Her other leading roles with the Company include Liù (Turandot), Desdemona (Otello), Violetta (La Traviata), Antonia (Les Contes d'Hoffmann), Mimì (La Bohème), Mathilde (Guillaume Tell), Micaëla (Carmen), and the title roles of Luisa Miller, Jenůfa, and Madama Butterfly, a role she has also sung at the Metropolitan Opera (in the celebrated Anthony Minghella production recently broadcast in HD to theaters across the globe), Chicago's Ravinia Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and at Florence's Maggio Musicale Festival. Her recent portrayal of Ellen Orford in the Met's Peter Grimes was captured for that company's HD series and is available on DVD. A champion of new works, the soprano has created roles in several world premieres, the most recent of which was her portrayal of Leslie Crosbie in Paul Moravec's The Letter for the Santa Fe Opera this past summer. Other creations include two works by Tobias Picker: the title role of *Emmeline* (televised for PBS from the Santa Fe Opera and recorded on Albany Records) and Roberta Alden in the Met's production of An American Tragedy. She also created the role of Love Simpson in Carlisle Floyd's Cold Sassy Tree (also recorded for Albany Records) for Houston Grand Opera. Among Racette's European credits are leading roles at La Scala, Covent Garden, Paris Opera, the Vienna State Opera, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, Bavarian State Opera, and the Maggio Musicale Festival. Recent career highlights include her reprise of *Il Trittico*'s three heroines for the Met, the title role of *Tosca* at the Met and Houston Grand Opera, and the title role of David Alden's acclaimed production of Kát'a Kabanová for English National Opera.

Winner of the 2003 Richard Tucker Award and the 2009 Beverly Sills Award, **John Relyea** (*Méphistophélès*) continues to distinguish himself as one of today's finest bass-baritones. The former Adler Fellow and Merola Opera Program alumnus made his 1996 San Francisco Opera debut as Colline in La Bohème and has since returned to the Company in more than twenty roles, including Angelotti (*Tosca*), Melcthal (*Guillaume Tell*), Hobson (Peter Grimes), Count Ribbing (Un Ballo in Maschera), Raimondo (Lucia di Lammermoor), and most recently the title role of *The Marriage of Figaro*; he appears as Méphistophélès in this summer's *Faust*. Relyea has appeared in many of the world's finest opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera; the Santa Fe Opera: Seattle Opera; the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Paris Opera; and Munich State Opera. Recent engagements include the title role of Le Nozze di Figaro at the Met and Munich's Bavarian State Opera; the title role of Aleko at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg and the Baden-Baden Festival; Banquo (Macbeth) at the Edinburgh Festival and the Met; Méphistophélès (Berlioz's La Damnation de Faust) with Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Met, as well as Méphistophélès of Gounod's Faust with Washington Concert Opera; Nick Shadow (The Rake's Progress) at Covent Garden; the title role of Bluebeard's Castle and Giorgio (I Puritani) with Seattle Opera; and Alidoro (La Cenerentola) at the Met. Relyea has recorded Idomeneo and Mahler's Symphony No. 8 for EMI and appears on the Metropolitan Opera's DVD presentations of Don Giovanni, I Puritani and Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (Deutsche Grammophon), La Cenerentola, and Macbeth (Metropolitan Opera HD Live Series).

Ian Robertson has been chorus director and conductor with San Francisco Opera since 1987, having prepared more than 200 productions for the Company. He was awarded the Olivier Messiaen Foundation Prize in 2003 for his artistic contribution to the preparation of the Company's North American premiere of Saint François d'Assise. Robertson made his San Francisco Opera conducting debut with Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk and has since led performances of Falstaff, Lohengrin, Rigoletto, La Traviata, Don Carlo, Turandot, Il Trovatore, and La Bohème. He has led the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus in many concerts, conducted Così fan tutte and La Périchole for San Francisco Opera Center, and has frequently led Merola Opera Program's Grand Finale concerts. Other North American opera credits include productions with Sarasota Opera, Edmonton Opera, and Philadelphia's Curtis Opera Theatre. Before joining San Francisco Opera, Robertson was head of music and chorus director of Scottish Opera, where he led numerous productions, including Il Barbiere di Siviglia, The Pearl Fishers, The Secret of Susanna, and Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg. The Scotland native trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and the University of Glasgow; he studied conducting under Sir Alexander Gibson. Robertson is currently the artistic director of the San Francisco Festival Chorale and the San Francisco Boys Chorus. A recent trip with the San Francisco Boys Chorus took him to the 2009 inauguration of the President of the United States.

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For further press information, please visit <u>www.sfopera.com/press</u> or contact Robin Freeman at (415) 565-6451 / rfreeman@sfopera.com.