

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA PRESENTS RICHARD STRAUSS' *SALOME* STARRING NADJA MICHAEL OCTOBER 18–NOVEMBER 1, WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE

MUSIC DIRECTOR NICOLA LUISOTTI CONDUCTS

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT 415.864.3330 OR SFOPERA.COM

SAN FRANCISCO (October 8, 2009)—San Francisco Opera presents Richard Strauss' biblical drama *Salome*, opening October 18 with five subsequent performances through November 1 at the War Memorial Opera House. Starring in the title role is German soprano Nadja Michael in her Company debut. This co-production with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and L'Opéra de Montréal is directed by Seán Curran with Consulting Director and Dramaturg James Robinson. Music Director Nicola Luisotti conducts Strauss' adaptation of the Oscar Wilde play for the first time.

Nadja Michael, who has previously appeared as Salome at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Milan's La Scala; and Berlin's Linden Opera, makes her San Francisco Opera debut in this production. The soprano's moving portrayal of Strauss' pathological seductress has been described as "indolent, sexy and scary" by critics in London. Bringing a strong dramatic intensity to the role, Michael will perform the opera's famously provocative "Dance of the Seven Veils."

British tenor Kim Begley returns to San Francisco Opera in the role of King Herod, which he has both performed at the Metropolitan Opera and recorded on the Decca label. Begley was last heard with the Company as Captain Vere in 2004's *Billy Budd*. Bass-baritone Greer Grimsley, who last appeared at San Francisco Opera as Count Monterone in *Rigoletto*, sings Jokanaan (John the Baptist).

Grimsley has previously sung Jokanaan at the Metropolitan Opera and Vancouver Opera, and he will reprise the role at Arizona Opera this season. Russian born mezzo-soprano Irina Mishura, who made her Company debut in the summer of 1998 in the title role of *Carmen* and returned in 2005 as Adalgisa in *Norma*, sings the role of Salome's mother, Herodias. Later this season Mishura will sing Herodias at Covent Garden and at Madrid's Teatro Real. American tenor Garrett Sorenson makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Narraboth in this production and mezzo-soprano Elizabeth DeShong appears as a Page, marking her Company debut.

San Francisco Opera Music Director Nicola Luisotti conducts the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in his first performances of the opera. The production team includes Director Seán Curran, a noted choreographer who makes his directorial debut with this production; Consulting Director and Dramaturg Jim Robinson, whose production of *Il Trittico* the Company presented earlier this season; and Production Designer Bruno Schwengl, who was also costume designer for *Il Trittico*.

The erotic and murderous biblical story of Salome and her lecherous stepfather Herod has shocked opera audiences since its first performance. Inspired by the Oscar Wilde play of the same name, Richard Strauss' opera premiered to great controversy in 1905 in Dresden and was subsequently banned in London and Vienna; it was also forced to close at the Metropolitan Opera after it's initial premiere performance there. Widely considered one of the great masterpieces of the 20th century, *Salome* is Strauss' third opera and his first great operatic success. The plot follows the sultry princess as she uses her seductive powers to orchestrate the decapitation of John the Baptist by the hand of the licentious Herod, much to the delight of the princess's mother Herodias, who had been denounced by the prophet. Salome's repulsive declarations of love to the severed head so revolt Herod that he ultimately has her killed as well.

San Francisco Opera Guild presents an Insight Panel Discussion featuring members of the cast and production team on Monday, October 12 at 6 p.m. in the Herbst Theatre. Insight panels are free for Opera members and \$5 for the general public; tickets can be purchased at the door 30 minutes prior to the discussion

Sung in German with English supertitles, the six performances of *Salome* are scheduled for October 18 (2 p.m.), October 21 (7:30 p.m.), October 24 (8 p.m.), October 27 (8 p.m.), October 30 (8 p.m.), and November 1 (2 p.m.), 2009.

Tickets and Information

Tickets for *Salome* range from \$15 to \$310 each and may be purchased online at <u>sfopera.com</u> or from the San Francisco Opera Box Office either in person or by phone at (415) 864-3330. Standing Room tickets go on sale at 10 a.m. on the day of each performance; tickets are \$10 each, cash only.

All performances will feature an informative Opera Talk by San Francisco Opera Director of Music Administration, Dr. Clifford Cranna. Talks begin fifty-five minutes before each performance in the orchestra section of the War Memorial Opera House and are presented free of charge to patrons with tickets for the corresponding performance.

The War Memorial Opera House is located at 301 Van Ness Avenue at Grove Street. Patrons are encouraged to use public transportation to attend San Francisco Opera performances. The War Memorial Opera House is within walking distance of the Civic Center BART station and near numerous bus lines, including 5, 21, 47, 49 and the F Market Street. For more public transportation information, visit bart.gov and sfmuni.com.

Casting, programs, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change. For further information about *Salome* and San Francisco Opera's 2009-10 season, please visit <u>sfopera.com</u>.

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Music Director Nicola Luisotti's inaugural season is made possible by John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn. This production is made possible, in part, by San Francisco Opera Guild. San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn, Franklin and Catherine Johnson, Mrs. Edmund W. Littlefield, and Bernard and Barbro Osher. San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by a grant from Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund. Wells Fargo is San Francisco Opera's Season Sponsor. San Francisco Opera is proud to recognize its corporate partners: United Airlines, the Official Airline of San Francisco Opera, and Chevron, fueling great performances everywhere.



2009-10 Season Sponsor

SALOME: PRODUCTION INFORMATION

SALOME by Richard Strauss

PRODUCTION NEW TO SAN FRANCISCO

October 18 (2 p.m.), 21 (7:30 pm), 24° (8 p.m.),

27° (8 p.m.), 30° (8 p.m.); November 1 (2 p.m.), 2009

Co-production with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and L'Opéra de Montréal

Based on the play by Oscar Wilde German translation by Hedwig Lachmann First performance: Dresden, December 9, 1905

First San Francisco Opera performance: September 12, 1930 Most recent San Francisco Opera performance: 1996–97 season Approximate running time: one hour, 45 minutes, with no intermission

Sung in German with English supertitles This production may contain nudity

Cast:
Salome
Nadja Michael*
Herod
Kim Begley
Jokanaan
Greer Grimsley
Herodias
Irina Mishura
Narraboth
A Page
Five Jews

Salome
Sim Begley
Greer Grimsley
Irina Mishura
Barrett Sorenson*
Elizabeth DeShong*
Beau Gibson*

Robert MacNeil Matthew O'Neill Corey Bix* Jeremey Milner*

First Soldier
Second Soldier
First Nazerene
Second Nazerene
A Slave
A Cappadocian

Andrew Funk*
Bojan Kneževič
Julien Robbins
Austin Kness†
Renée Tatum†
Kenneth Kellogg†

Production Team:

Conductor
Director and Choreographer
Consulting Director/Dramaturg
Production Designer
Lighting Designer
Chorus Director

Nicola Luisotti
Seán Curran*
James Robinson
Bruno Schwengl
Chris Maravich
Ian Robertson

Opera Guild Insight Panel Discussion Monday, October 12, 6 p.m.

Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco

This press release and downloadable 2009-10 season photographs are available at **sfopera.com/press**. For further press information, please contact:

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^{*} San Francisco Opera Debut † Current Adler Fellow • Opera Vision performance

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Soprano NADJA MICHAEL (Salome) makes her San Francisco Opera debut in a role she has performed at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Milan's La Scala; and Berlin's Linden Opera. She began her career as a mezzo-soprano, singing the roles of Eboli (Don Carlos), Amneris (Aida), Venus (Tannhäuser), and the title roles of Carmen and Samson et Dalila at Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Vienna State Opera, Teatro Regio in Turin, Florence's Maggio Musicale Festival, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Teatro La Fenice in Venice, among others. Since her debut as a soprano in 2005, Michael has sung Leonore (*Fidelio*) at the Vienna State Opera; the title role of *Tosca* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Saxon State Opera in Dresden, Bavarian State Opera, and at the Arena di Verona and the Bregenz Festival; Santuzza (Cavalleria Rusticana) at Deutsche Oper Berlin; the title role of The Merry Widow at Berlin State Opera; Lady Macbeth (Macbeth) with Bavarian State Opera and Saxon State Opera; and the title role of *Medea* at La Monnaie in Brussels. Her recent and upcoming engagements include both Venus and Elisabeth (*Tannhäuser*) at Deutsche Oper Berlin; Marie/Marietta (*Die Tote Stadt*) with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Lady Macbeth in Munich; Salome at Saxon State Opera as well as in Bologna and Munich; also the title roles of *Iphigénie en Tauride* in Brussels and Mayr's *Medea in* Corinto in Munich. Michael's performances of Salome at Covent Garden and La Scala are available on DVD, as well as her performance of Eboli at the Vienna State Opera.

British tenor KIM BEGLEY (Herod) made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2004 as Captain Vere in Billy Budd. He began his career with six seasons as a principal tenor at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where he has since returned frequently as a guest artist (Kát'a Kabanová, Pfitzner's Palestrina, Billy Budd, Wozzeck), and where he made two important Wagnerian debuts: as Siegmund (Die Walküre) and Erik (Der Fliegende Holländer). Begley is also a frequent guest at English National Opera where he has sung numerous roles, including the title role of *Parsifal* for which he won a Laurence Olivier Award. He has performed at the opera houses in Frankfurt (Lohengrin, Death in Venice); Barcelona (The Makropulos Case); Brussels (Khovanshchina); Amsterdam (Peter Grimes); Paris, at both the Bastille (*The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, *Billy Budd*, *Flying Dutchman*) and the Théâtre du Châtelet (Fidelio, Busoni's Doktor Faust, Henze's The Bassarids); La Scala (Wozzeck, Der Freischütz, Das Rheingold, Il Prigioniero); Berlin State Opera (Der Freischütz); and the Bayreuth Festival (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*). In the United States, Begley has performed at Lyric Opera of Chicago (The Makropulos Case, The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny, Billy Budd, The Flying Dutchman, Fidelio), the Metropolitan Opera (Jenufa, War and Peace, Salome, Picker's An American Tragedy, Das Rheingold), as well as Los Angeles Opera and Washington National Opera (Jenůfa). His broad discography includes Falstaff, Salome and Das Rheingold (Decca); The Flying Dutchman (Chandos); and the Grammy award-winning Doktor Faust (Erato).

GREER GRIMSLEY (Jokanaan) made his San Francisco Opera debut as Scarpia in the 2001 production of Tosca and returned in 2006 as Count Monterone in Rigoletto. The New Orleans native first came to international attention as Escamillo in the world tour of the Peter Brook production La Tragédie de Carmen. He garnered critical acclaim in 2005 and this past summer as Wotan in Seattle Opera's Ring cycle. Grimsley made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Captain Balstrode (Peter Grimes) and has subsequently performed there as Escamillo (Carmen) Jokanaan, Scarpia, Telramund (Lohengrin), and Amfortas (Parsifal). He created the role of Canyka in the world premiere of Ashoka's Dream with the Santa Fe Opera and performed Count de Luna in the American premiere of Verdi's Le

Trouvère, the French-language version of *Il Trovatore*. Recent engagements include Don Pizzarro (*Fidelio*) with Opera Company of Philadelphia, Portland Opera and Portuguese National Opera; Scarpia with the San Diego Opera and Seattle Opera; Jokanaan at Opera Pacific and Vancouver Opera; Wotan (*Das Rheingold*) in concert with the Indianapolis Symphony; Amonasro (*Aida*) with Portland Opera; the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer* with Seattle Opera; Méphistophélès (*Faust*) with New Orleans Opera; the title role of *Macbeth* with Vancouver Opera; Claggart (*Billy Budd*) with Pittsburgh Opera; and Wotan (*Siegfried*) in Venice. The bass-baritone's upcoming engagements include Jokanaan with Arizona Opera; Scarpia with Montreal Opera and Opera Colorado; Macbeth with Opera Lyra Ottawa; and Wotan (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) in Cologne and on tour in Shanghai.

Russian-born mezzo-soprano IRINA MISHURA (Herodias) made her Company debut in the summer of 1998 in the title role of Carmen and returned in 2005 as Adalgisa (Norma). She made her operatic debut with the Moldavian State Opera, where she rose to the position of leading mezzo-soprano, singing virtually all the principal mezzo roles. Amneris (Aida) was the vehicle for her debuts in Berlin, Dallas, Portland, Lisbon, Los Angeles, Cagliari, and the Aspen Music Festival; the title role of Carmen provided debuts at Milan's La Scala, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Finnish National Opera, and the Arena di Verona. These roles have also taken her to the Metropolitan Opera, where she has sung Dalila (Samson et Dalila, opposite Plácido Domingo), Carmen, Eboli (Don Carlo), Azucena, Amneris, Federica (Luisa Miller), Marina (Boris Godunov), La Cieca (La Gioconda), and Madelon (Andrea Chénier). Mishura's recent engagements include Eboli and Azucena in Geneva; Azucena in Bilbao and Madrid; Azucena, Adalgisa, and Klytemnästra (*Elektra*) with Washington National Opera; Madelon and Federica at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona; Azucena and Ježibaba (Rusalka) at Canadian Opera Company; Amneris in Cincinnati; Santuzza (Cavalleria Rusticana) in Monte Carlo; and Amneris and the title role of *Carmen* at the Savonlinna Festival. She sings Herodias with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden and at Madrid's Teatro Real later this season, in addition to Azucena in Barcelona.

American tenor **GARRETT SORENSON** (*Narraboth*) makes his San Francisco Opera debut this season. Winner of the 2003 George London Foundation Competition, his recent engagements include Froh (*Das Rheingold*) and Cassio (*Otello*) at the Metropolitan Opera; the Duke of Mantua (*Rigoletto*) with Arizona Opera; the title role of *Werther* with Kentucky Opera; Rodolfo (*La Bohème*) with Houston Grand Opera; Alfredo Germont (*La Traviata*) at Opera Colorado; the title role of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; and the title role of *Faust* with New Orleans Opera. Other career highlights include Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) with Houston Grand Opera and PORT Opera (Maine); Sam Kaplan (*Street Scene*) with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; Leukippos (*Daphne*) at the Santa Fe Opera; Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*) and Alfredo Germont with Boston Lyric Opera; and the Italian Singer (*Der Rosenkavalier*) with Los Angeles Opera. A graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, his other roles with that company include Da-ud (*Die Ägyptische Helena*), Alfred (*Die Fledermaus*), Arturo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Itulbo (*Il Pirata*), and Scaramuccio (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), among others.

Pennsylvania-born mezzo-soprano **ELIZABETH DeSHONG** (*Page*) makes her San Francisco Opera debut in a role she has previously performed at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Her recent credits include Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) at the Glyndebourne Festival; Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) with Toronto's Canadian Opera Company; Suzy (*La Rondine*) at the Metropolitan Opera; also Ruggiero (*Alcina*) and the Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) at Wolf Trap Opera. A graduate of Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center, DeShong made her debut as one of the Noble Orphans in *Der*

Rosenkavalier; other performances with that company include Meg Page (Falstaff), Mercédès (Carmen), and Rosina in student performances of Il Barbiere di Siviglia). On the concert stage, she has performed with the Pittsburgh Symphony, New York City Ballet, Chicago's Ravinia Festival, and the Cleveland Orchestra. Upcoming engagements include Dorabella (Così fan tutte) in a concert performance with the Jacksonville Symphony; the High Priestess (Aida) at the Met; Rosina with Arizona Opera; and Suzuki (Madama Butterfly) with the Santa Fe Opera.

Merola Opera Program alumnus **BEAU GIBSON** (*Jew*) makes his San Francisco Opera debut this season and returns later this fall as Cassio in *Otello*. Recent credits include the First Armored Man (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Froh (*Das Rheingold*), as well as covering the title role of Braunfel's *Die Vögel* with Los Angeles Opera; Edoardo (*Un Giorno di Regno*), Vanderdendur (*Candide*), and Brighella (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) Wolf Trap Opera; and Beppe (*Pagliacci*) and Bénédict (Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict*) with Houston Grand Opera. An alumnus of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, his other roles with that company have included the Captain (*Simon Boccanegra*), the Messenger (*Aida*), Pásek (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), the Magistrate (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), and Maintop (*Billy Budd*), among others; he was also the tenor soloist in the world premiere of the Christopher Theofanidis dramatic oratorio *The Refuge*. On the concert stage Gibson has performed with the National Symphony (Washington D.C.), the Orchestra Sinfonica dell'Opera Academy in Rome, Woodlands Symphony Orchestra, and the Mercury Baroque Ensemble, among others. Upcoming engagements include Menaldo in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* and Froh in the complete *Der Ring des Nibelungen* with Los Angeles Opera.

ROBERT MacNEIL (Jew) made his San Francisco Opera debut last season as the High Priest of Neptune in Idomeneo. He regularly performs at Los Angeles Opera, most recently in that company's productions of Tannhäuser, Der Rosenkavalier, Il Trovatore, Fidelio, and La Bohème; he returned last season for Il Tabarro. The tenor made his debut at the Ojai Festival under Kent Nagano in Orff's Die Kluge and recorded the role of Martin in Copland's The Tender Land, which was released on the Koch International Label. On the concert stage, he has performed as a soloist with the New West Symphony, California Philharmonic, Oregon Symphony, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Sydney Choral Festival, Beijing's Central Union Philharmonic, and the San Diego Chamber Orchestra, among others. He is a former national finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and holds degrees from Chapman University and the University of Southern California.

Former Adler Fellow **MATTHEW O'NEILL** (*Jew*) made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2006 as Borsa (*Rigoletto*) and returned for the subsequent Company productions of *Tristan und Isolde*, *Carmen, Manon Lescaut, Der Rosenkavalier, Tannhäuser, Madama Butterfly, Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Boris Godunov*; he performed the role of Il Tinca (*Il Tabarro*) in this season's *Il Trittico*. The tenor has also appeared as the Prologue and Peter Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*) and Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) at the Lincoln Theater in Yountville. Other roles in O'Neill's repertoire include Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Golo (Schumann's *Genoveva*), and Tamino (*The Magic Flute*). In 2003 he was a regional finalist for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and he is a former apprentice artist with Des Moines Metro Opera. O'Neill holds a master's degree in vocal performance from the University of Minnesota and a bachelor's degree in guitar from the University of Evansville.

American tenor **COREY BIX** (*Jew*) makes his San Francisco Opera debut this season. Winner of the Robert Lauch Memorial Grant from the Wagner Society of New York and the George London/Kirsten Flagstad Award, his recent credits include the Prince (*Rusalka*) and the title role of Stravinsky's

Oedipus Rex with Greek National Opera; Matteo (Arabella) at Switzerland's Theater St. Gallen; Bacchus (Ariadne auf Naxos) at the Vienna Volksoper; Don José (Carmen) with Aspen Opera Theater; Sam (Susannah) with New York Opera Projects; and recitals at the Bard Music Festival and under the auspices of the George London Foundation at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York City. A former apprentice artist with the Santa Fe Opera, his roles with that company include Dr. Caius (Falstaff), the Second Jew (Salome); also covering Tamino (Die Zauberflöte) and the title role of Lucio Silla. Bix's upcoming engagements include the Kaiser (Die Frau ohne Schatten) for Graz Opera and the First Senator in Schreker's Die Gezeichneten with Los Angeles Opera.

American bass **JEREMY MILNER** (*Jew*) made his professional debut with Tulsa Opera as Doctor Grenvil in *La Traviata* in 2003. Career highlights include Crébillon (*La Rondine*) with Sarasota Opera as well as Gandalf and the voice of Smaug the Dragon in that company's U.S. premiere presentation of Dean Burry's *The Hobbit*; Elder Ott (*Susannah*) with Central City Opera; Snug (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) with Des Moines Metro Opera; as well as Frère Laurent (*Roméo et Juliette*) and Mr. March and Mr. Dashwood (*Little Women*) with Philadelphia's Center City Opera. A graduate of the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, Milner's recent engagements include Snug with Princeton Festival Opera; Simone (*Gianni Schicchi*) as well as the Armchair and a Tree (*L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*) with Opera Company of Philadelphia; and Elder Ott with Mobile Opera.

ANDREW FUNK (Soldier) makes his San Francisco Opera debut this season. The American bass's recent credits include Publio (La Clemenza di Tito) and the Commendatore (Don Giovanni) with Chicago Opera Theater and Kaspar (Der Freischütz) with Opera Boston. An alumnus of Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center, Funk has performed numerous roles with that company, including Sciarrone (Tosca), the King of Egypt (Aida), Second Armored Man (Die Zauberflöte), and Pistola (Falstaff), among others. Career highlights include Don Pedro (Berlioz's Béatrice et Bénédict), Zuniga (Carmen), and the First Nazarene (Salome) with the Santa Fe Opera; Hagen (Götterdämmerung) with Seattle Opera; and multiple roles in the world premiere of Philip Glass's Galileo Galilei in Chicago and New York. Funk's upcoming engagements include Besso (Cavalli's Giasone) with Chicago Opera Theater and Banquo (Macbeth) with Opera Lyra Ottawa.

Former Adler Fellow and Merola alumnus **BOJAN KNEŽEVIĆ** (*Messenger*) made his San Francisco Opera debut as Marquis D'Obigny (*La Traviata*) in 1995 and has since appeared with the Company in a number of roles, including Harašta (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), Dulcamara (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), and most recently as Haly (*L'Italiana in Algeri*). Career highlights include Frosch (*Die Fledermaus*) with Lyric Opera of Chicago; Scarpia (*Tosca*) with Mississippi Opera; Benoit and Alcindoro (*La Bohème*) with Vancouver Opera; Enrico Ashton (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) with Opera Santa Barbara; the Four Villains (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) with Sacramento Opera and Fort Worth Opera; Narumov (*The Queen of Spades*) with the National Symphony (Washington D.C.); and the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the New National Theatre in Tokyo.

JULIEN ROBBINS (*First Nazarene*) made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1981 as Liberto (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*) and returned later that season as Monterone (*Rigoletto*). The American bass-baritone has sung more than fifty roles at the Metropolitan Opera in twenty-four consecutive seasons since his 1979 debut. Internationally, the Pennsylvania native has appeared in productions of *Don Giovanni*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Bohème*, *Aida*, *Carmen*, *Trouble in Tahiti*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Otello*, *Le Comte Ory*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera* with such companies as Milan's La Scala,

Deutsche Oper Berlin, Hamburg State Opera, and the Glyndebourne Festival, among many others. He is also a frequent guest of such U.S. companies as Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Opera, Washington National Opera, and the Santa Fe Opera. Robbins has recorded Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* with Telarc, *La Traviata* with Deutsche Grammophon, and *Salome* for Sony Classical.

Mezzo-soprano **RENÉE TATUM** (*Slave*) is a first-year Adler Fellow and alumna of the 2008 Merola Opera Program, where she performed the role of Nancy (*Albert Herring*). She made her Company debut earlier this year as Annina (*La Traviata*) and returned as Inez (*Il Trovatore*) and a Novice (*Suor Angelica*). Recent engagements include the Secretary (*The Consul*) and Mercédès (*Carmen*) with Chautauqua Opera; Mercédès with New Orleans Opera; Omar (*The Death of Klinghoffer*), the Matchmaker (*The Marriage*), Ragonde (*Le Comte Ory*), and Mrs. Webb (*Our Town*) with the Juilliard Opera Center; the title role in the workshop of *Amelia* with Seattle Opera; and Bersi (*Andrea Chénier*) with Mobile Opera. Tatum is a two-time recipient of the Richard F. Gold Career Grant and winner of the 2008 Opera Index Competition, the 2008 Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation Competition, the 2007 Giulio Gari Foundation Competition, and the David Adams Art Song Competition.

Baritone **AUSTIN KNESS** (*Second Nazarene*), a native of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is a first-year Adler Fellow who sang Sciarrone (*Tosca*) and Marquis d'Obigny (*La Traviata*) with the Company this past summer and returned this season as Marco (*Gianni Schicchi*). An alumnus of the Merola Opera Program, he performed the title role in the Merola 2008 production of *Don Giovanni*. He has performed with Indiana University Opera Theater as Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Don Giovanni, Escamillo (*Carmen*), and Eddie Carbone (*A View from the Bridge*). Kness is a former member of the Des Moines Metropolitan Opera Apprentice Program (2006–07), where he performed the roles of Moralès (*Carmen*) and Count Ceprano (*Rigoletto*). The baritone has also sung the roles of Fiorello (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) and Moralès with Cedar Rapids Opera Theater.

Current Adler Fellow **KENNETH KELLOGG** (*Cappadocian*) made his Company debut as the King (*The Little Prince*) in 2008 and his War Memorial Opera House debut as Pietro (*Simon Boccanegra*) in 2008, returning as Colline (*La Bohème*), the Voice of the Oracle (*Idomeneo*), Nikitich and a Police Sergeant (*Boris Godunov*), the Jailer (*Tosca*), Dr. Grenvil (*La Traviata*), and Pinellino (*Gianni Schicchi*). An alumnus of the 2007 Merola Opera Program, he created the role of Tobias in the world premiere of Thomas Pasatieri's *The Hotel Casablanca*. The bass is a past winner of the Annapolis Opera competition, the Paul Robeson Competition and a national finalist in the Sun Valley Opera Competition in 2007. Recent and upcoming engagements include Ferrando (*Il Trovatore*) with Eugene Opera and his role debut as the King (*Aida*) with Atlanta Opera.

Italian conductor **NICOLA LUISOTTI** leads four productions in his inaugural season as San Francisco Opera's music director: *Il Trovatore, Salome, Otello,* and *La Fanciulla del West.* He made his Company debut in 2005 conducting *La Forza del Destino* and, following the announcement of his appointment as music director in 2007, he returned to San Francisco Opera in November 2008 for critically acclaimed performances of *La Bohème*. Maestro Luisotti has garnered enthusiastic praise from both audiences and critics for his work at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden (*Turandot, Madama Butterfly, Il Trovatore*); the Metropolitan Opera (*La Bohème, Tosca*); Paris Opera (*La Traviata, Tosca*); the Vienna State Opera (*Simon Boccanegra*); Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice (*Un Ballo in Maschera, La Fanciulla del West, La Traviata, Simon Boccanegra, Il Viaggio a Reims*); Venice's La Fenice (*Madama Butterfly*); Munich's Bavarian State Opera (*Macbeth, Tosca*); Frankfurt Opera (*Il*

Trittico); Madrid's Teatro Real (Il Trovatore, La Damnation de Faust); Los Angeles Opera (Carmen, Pagliacci); Toronto's Canadian Opera Company (Un Ballo in Maschera); Seattle Opera (Macbeth); and in Tokyo's Suntory Hall (Turandot, Tosca, La Bohème, and Don Giovanni). Upcoming opera engagements include Salome at Bologna's Teatro Comunale, Così fan tutte in Suntory Hall, and Aida at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Equally at home on the concert stage, Maestro Luisotti serves as principal guest conductor of the Tokyo Symphony and has established growing relationships with the orchestras of London (Philharmonia Orchestra), Genoa, Budapest, Munich (Bavarian Radio Orchestra), and Rome (Santa Cecilia Orchestra), as well as the Berlin Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, and the Atlanta Symphony. His upcoming orchestral engagements include concerts with orchestras of Milan, Turin, and Frankfurt. The conductor's expanding discography includes a complete recording of Stiffellio (Dynamic) with the orchestra of Trieste's Teatro Verdi and the critically acclaimed Duets (Deutsche Grammophon), featuring Anna Netrebko and Rolando Villazón. He is also on the podium of a DVD recording of the Met's recent La Bohème, starring Angela Gheorghiu and Ramón Vargas (EMI).

American director and choreographer **SEÁN CURRAN** makes his San Francisco Opera debut this season. Artistic director of the Seán Curran Company, he is a graduate and guest faculty member of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Recent projects include productions of *Much Ado* About Nothing, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and The Taming of the Shrew for the Shakespeare Theater; the twentieth-anniversary production of *Nixon in China* and *Street Scene* at Opera Theatre of St. Louis; choreography for the New York City Opera productions of L'Etoile, Alcina, Turandot, Haroun and the Sea of Stories, Capriccio, and Acis and Galatea; the Playwrights Horizons's production of My Life with Albertine; and Shakespeare in the Park's As You Like It. He recently made his Metropolitan Opera debut choreographing *Roméo et Juliette*. Curran's work has appeared on Broadway in James Joyce's *The Dead* for Playwrights Horizons as well as *The Rivals* and *Cymbeline* at Lincoln Center Theater. He has created works for Trinity Irish Dance Company, American Ballet Theatre's studio company, Denmark's Upper Cut Company, Sweden's Skänes Dance Theater, Dublin's Irish Modern Dance Theatre, Ririe Woodbury Dance Theater, Zenon Dance Company, and Dance Alloy, among others. Irish American Magazine selected him as one of its "Top 100" in the year 2000, and he was awarded a Choreographer's Fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts in 1998 and 2002.

Artistic director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, **JAMES ROBINSON** (*Consulting Director*, *Dramaturg*) made his San Francisco Opera debut in the 2005 production of *Norma* and returned in 2008 for *L'Elisir d'Amore* and for this season's *Il Trittico*. One of the most widely performed directors in North America, his credits include new productions of *Giulio Cesare*, *La Bohème*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, and Catán's *Salsipuedes* for Houston Grand Opera; *Il Trittico*, *Il Viaggio a Reims*, and *La Bohème* for New York City Opera; *Così fan tutte* and *The Rake's Progress* for the Santa Fe Opera; *Norma and Elektra* for Canadian Opera Company; *Nabucco* for the Dallas Opera; Antheil's *Transatlantic*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera* for Minnesota Opera; and *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Eugene Onegin* for Opera Colorado, where he served as artistic director from 2000 to 2008. He has also directed for Opera Australia, the Royal Swedish Opera, Opera Ireland, and the London Symphony Orchestra. Prior to his appointment as artistic director of Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Robinson's work with that company included *Street Scene*, Argento's *Miss Havisham's Fire*, *Nixon in China*, and *Radamisto*. Recent projects include a new production of Corigliano's *The Ghosts*

of Versailles for St. Louis and the Wexford Festival, Argento's Casanova for Minnesota Opera, and Die Entführung aus dem Serail for Welsh National Opera.

BRUNO SCHWENGL (*Production Designer*) made his San Francisco Opera debut earlier this season with his costume designs for *Il Trittico*. A native of Austria, he was educated as a graphic, set, and costume designer and his work has been seen internationally. Schwengl's recent engagements include *Madama Butterfly* in Lausanne; the ballet *Alice in Wonderland* in Vienna and Berlin; *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Monte Carlo Opera; and *Un Ballo in Maschera* for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. His designs have also been seen at Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Colorado, New York City Opera, the Santa Fe Opera, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. In Europe, he has created sets and costumes for opera companies in Copenhagen, Zurich, Munich, Naples, Rome, and Venice. Schwengl's many designs for the Gate Theatre in Dublin have included productions of works by Oscar Wilde, William Shakespeare, Noël Coward, and Charles Dickens.