# *Otello*

**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA**
**2009–10 SEASON**

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| **Timings:** | **Acts I and II:** | 1 hour, 10 minutes |
| | **Intermission** | 25 minutes |
| | **Acts III and IV:** | 1 hour, 15 minutes |

**Total Running Time:** 2 hours, 55 minutes

**First performance:** Milan, La Scala; February 5, 1887; with Francesco Tamagno, Romilda Pantaleoni, and Victor Maurel; Franco Faccio conducted.

**First performance in the U.S.:** New York, Academy of Music; April 16, 1888; with Francesco Marconi, Eva Tetrazzini, and Antonio Galassi; Italo Campanini conducted.

**First performance in San Francisco:** Grand Opera House (Grand Italian Opera Company); February 22, 1890; with Francesco Tamagno and Emma Albani; Luigi Arditi conducted.

**First San Francisco Opera performance:** December 5, 1934.

**Orchestra:** 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes plus 1 English horn, 2 clarinets plus 1 bass clarinet, 4 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 cimbasso, 1 timpani, 2 percussion, 1 harp; regular (40) strings.

**Backstage:** 4 mandolins, 2 guitars, and 2 English horns for the Act II "Dove guardi splendono raggi" chorus; 6 trumpets for the Act III convocation. There is also the famed three-note organ pedal cluster that lasts from the beginning of the opera right through "Si calma la bufera" at the end of the victory chorus. Both the thunder (indicated by Verdi) and the cannon shots are done electronically in the first act. The Act III cannon is done the old-fashioned way, on a large bass drum.

**Cuts:** None

**Production:** This production by Lyric Opera of Chicago made its premiere in 2001 as the season opener for that company's 2001–02 season. It also appeared at the 2005 Glyndebourne Festival.

**Previous Casts:**

| | Otello | Desdemona | Iago | Cassio | Director | Conductor |
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| **1934** | Melchior | Rethberg | Bonelli | Marlowe | Agnini | Merola |
| **1936** | Martinelli* | Rethberg | Tibbett* | Clemens | Agnini | Merola |
| **1939** | Martinelli | Rethberg | Tibbett | Oliviero | Agnini | Merola |
| **1947** | Svanholm | Albanese | Tibbett | De Paolis | Agnini | Steinberg |
| **1948** | Svanholm | Albanese | Warren | De Paolis | Agnini | Steinberg |
| **1950** | Vinay | Tebaldi | Valdengo | De Paolis | Agnini | Cleva |
| **1951** | Vinay | Nelli | Valdengo | Schwabacher | Agnini | Cleva |
| **1959** | Del Monaco | Tucci | Zanasi | Zampieri | Yannopoulos | Molinari-Pradelli |
| **1962** | McCracken | De los Angeles<br>Kabaivanska † | Gobbi | Riffel | Capobianco | Molinari-Pradelli |
| **1964** | McCracken | Lorengar*† | Gobbi<br>Ludgin | Peterson<br>Montal | Yannopoulos | Molinari-Pradelli |
| **1970** | McCracken | Kabaivanska | Paskalis | Davies | Ponnelle | Gregor |
| **1974** | King | Lorengar | Janulako† | Walker | Ponnelle | Lopez-Cobos |
| **1978** | Domingo | Ricciarelli | Sarabia | McCauley | Ponnelle | Patanè |
| **1983** | Domingo<br>Cassilly<br>Cossutta | M. Price | Carroli | Davies | Ponnelle | Janowski |
| **1989** | Mauro | Ricciarelli | Ellis | De Haan | Asagaroff | Kord |
| **2002** | J.F. West<br>Decker<br>Barasorda<br>Galouzine | Racette* | Leiferkus | Very | Sagi | Runnicles |

* Role debut

† U.S. debut

There was a single performance of *Otello* in 1934, our first, but it featured a rarity: Lauritz Melchior's rare appearance in the title role, in Italian. In 1936, there was another single performance of *Otello*; that one was memorable for the fact that both Giovanni Martinelli and Lawrence Tibbett were performing Otello and Iago for the first time in their careers. From 1939 through 1964, *Otello* was also given in Los Angeles; there were performances in San Diego in 1959 and 1964, and one in Sacramento, likewise in 1964. The number of performances increased gradually through the years, until there were seven performances in 1983 and the same this year. *Otello* was the season opener in 1951, 1964, 1978 and 1983; the 1983 opener featured a last-minute New York–San Francisco flight by Plácido Domingo, who arrived for a delayed 10 p.m. curtain.