SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

2010–11 REPERTORY SEASON
SUMMARY INFORMATION

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA 2010–11 SEASON AT A GLANCE

- Ten productions, seven new to San Francisco Opera
- Presented from September 10 to December 5, 2010 and May 29 to July 3, 2011

Aida

PRODUCTION NEW TO SAN FRANCISCO
Presented September 10–October 6, 2010 and November 23–December 5*, 2010

Co-production with Houston Grand Opera, English National Opera, and Norwegian National Opera

Starring Micaela Carosi, Michele Capalbo*, Marcello Giordani, Carlo Ventre*, Dolora Zajick, Guang Yang*, Marco Vratogna, Quinn Kelsey, Hao Jiang Tian, and Eric Owens

Conducted by Nicola Luisotti and Giuseppe Finzi
Directed by Jo Davies

Werther

NEW PRODUCTION PREMIERE
Presented September 15–October 1, 2010

Co-production with Lyric Opera of Chicago

Starring Ramón Vargas and Elīna Garanča

Conducted by Emmanuel Villaume
Directed by Francisco Negrin

Le Nozze di Figaro (The Marriage of Figaro)

Presented September 21–October 22, 2010
San Francisco Opera production

Starring Luca Pisaroni, Kostas Smoriginas, Danielle de Niese, Heidi Stober, Ellie Dehn, Michèle Losier, Lucas Meachem, and Trevor Scheunemann

Conducted by Nicola Luisotti
Directed by John Copley

Madama Butterfly

PRODUCTION NEW TO SAN FRANCISCO
Presented October 12–November 27, 2010

Lyric Opera of Chicago production

Starring Svetla Vassileva, Daniela Dessi, and Stefano Secco

Conducted by Nicola Luisotti and Julian Kovatchev
Directed by Jose Maria Condemi

Cyrano de Bergerac

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA PREMIERE
Presented October 24–November 12, 2010

Théâtre du Châtelet (Paris) production

Starring Plácido Domingo, Ainhoa Arteta, and Thiago Arancam

Conducted by Patrick Fournillier
Directed by Petrika Ionesco

The Makropulos Case

NEW PRODUCTION PREMIERE
Presented November 10–28, 2010

Co-production with Finnish National Opera

Starring Karita Mattila, Miro Dvorsky, and Gerd Grochowski

Conducted by Jiří Bělohlávek
Directed by Olivier Tambosi

Der Ring des Nibelungen (The Ring of the Nibelung)

Presented in three cycles June 14–July 3, 2011
Non-subscription performances: *Siegfried* - May 29, 2011; *Götterdämmerung* - June 5, 2011

Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, and *Siegfried*: co-productions with Washington National Opera (*Siegfried*: production new to San Francisco)
Götterdämmerung: San Francisco Opera production (new production premiere)

Starring Nina Stemme, Mark Delavan, Ian Storey, Gordon Hawkins, Larissa Diadkova, David Cangelosi, Anja Kampe, Heidi Melton, Brandon Jovanovich, Stefan Margita, Gerd Grochowski, and Andrea Silvestrelli

Conducted by Donald Runnicles
Directed by Francesca Zambello

San Francisco Opera Debuts

Thiago Arancam	Christian de Neuveville in *Cyrano de Bergerac*
Susannah Biller †♦	Kristina in *The Makropulos Case*
Michele Capalbo	title role of *Aida*
Micaela Carosi	title role of *Aida*
Melissa Citro ♦	Freia and Gutrune in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*
Ellie Dehn	Countess Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*
Elīna Garanča	Charlotte in *Werther*
Sara Gartland †♦	Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*
Gerd Grochowski ♦	Baron Jaroslav Prus in *The Makropulos Case*
Gordon Hawkins	Alberich in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*
Brian Jagde †♦	Janek in *The Makropulos Case*
Anja Kampe	Sieglinde in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*
Maya Lahyani †♦	Kätchen in *Werther*; The Duenna and Sister Marta in *Cyrano de Bergerac*
Michèle Losier	Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*
Ronnita Miller ♦	Erda and First Norn in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*
Danielle de Niese	Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*
Kostas Smoriginas	title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*
Heidi Stober	Sophie in *Werther*; Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*
Ian Storey ♦	Siegfried in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*
Stacey Tappan	Woglinde and the Forest Bird in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*
Christian Van Horn	The King of Egypt in *Aida*; The Bailiff in *Werther*; The Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*
Guang Yang	Amneris in *Aida*

Conductors:

Jiří Bělohlávek	*The Makropulos Case*
Patrick Fournillier	*Cyrano de Bergerac*
Julian Kovatchev	*Madama Butterfly*

Directors:

Jo Davies	*Aida*
Petrika Ionesco	*Cyrano de Bergerac*
Francisco Negrin	*Werther*

† Current Adler Fellow
♦ Role debut

Season Artists to Date

Sopranos:
Ainhoa Arteta ♦
Susannah Biller *‡♫♦
Michele Capalbo *
Micaela Carosi *
Melissa Citro*♫
Leah Crocetto ‡♫♦
Ellie Dehn *
Daniela Dessi
Sara Gartland *‡♫
Anja Kampe *
Karita Mattila ♦
Heidi Melton †♫♦
Danielle de Niese *
Nina Stemme ♦
Heidi Stober *♦
Stacey Tappan *
Svetla Vassileva
Tamara Wapinsky †♫

Mezzo-Sopranos:
Catherine Cook †♫
Larissa Diadkova
Elīna Garanča *
Daveda Karanas †♫♦
Maya Lahyani *‡♫♦
Michèle Losier *♫
Lauren McNeese
Ronnita Miller *♫♦
Renée Tatum †♫♦
Guang Yang *
Dolora Zajick †♫

Tenors:
Thiago Arancam *♦
David Cangelosi
Plácido Domingo
Miro Dvorsky
Greg Fedderly
Marcello Giordani ♦
Thomas Glenn †♫♦
Brian Jagde *‡♫♦
Brandon Jovanovich ♦
David Lomeli ‡♫
Robert MacNeil
Stefan Margita
Matthew O'Neill †♫♦
Stefano Secco
Ian Storey*♦
Ramón Vargas
Carlo Ventre

Baritones:
Mark Delavan †♫♦
Gordon Hawkins*
Quinn Kelsey ♫
Austin Kness ‡♫
Lester Lynch ♦
Lucas Meachem †♫
Timothy Mix ♦
Brian Mulligan ♦
Luca Pisaroni
Stephen Powell
Trevor Scheunemann
Kostas Smoriginas *
Marco Vratogna

Bass-Baritones:
John Del Carlo ♫
Gerd Grochowski *♦
Christian Van Horn *
Eric Owens
Daniel Sumegi †♫
Dale Travis †♫♦

Basses:
Andrea Silvestrelli
Hao Jiang Tian

* San Francisco Opera debut

♦Role debut

† Former Adler Fellow
‡Current Adler Fellow
♫ Merola Opera Program graduate

Conductors

Nicola Luisotti	*Aida* *Le Nozze di Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro*) *Madama Butterfly*
Donald Runnicles	*Der Ring Des Nibelungen*
Giuseppe Finzi	*Aida*
Jiří Bělohlávek*	*The Makropulos Case*
Patrick Fournillier*	*Cyrano de Bergerac*
Julian Kovatchev*	*Madama Butterfly*
Emmanuel Villaume	*Werther*

* San Francisco Opera debut

Directors

Francesca Zambello	*Der Ring des Nibelungen*
Jose Maria Condemi †♫	*Madama Butterfly*
John Copley	*Le Nozze di Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro*)
Jo Davies*	*Aida*
Petrika Ionesco*	*Cyrano de Bergerac*
Francisco Negrin*	*Werther*
Olivier Tambosi	*The Makropulos Case*

***** San Francisco Opera debut
† Former Adler Fellow
♫ Merola Opera Program graduate

Merola Opera Program and Adler Fellowship Program Artists

Susannah Biller ‡♫
Melissa Citro ♫
Catherine Cook †♫
Leah Crocetto ‡♫
John Del Carlo ♫
Mark Delavan †♫
Sara Gartland ‡♫
Thomas Glenn †♫
Brian Jagde ‡♫
Daveda Karanas †♫
Quinn Kelsey ♫
Austin Kness ‡♫
Maya Lahyani ‡♫
David Lomelí ‡♫
Michèle Losier ♫
Lucas Meachem †♫
Heidi Melton †♫
Ronnita Miller ♫
Matthew O'Neill †♫
Daniel Sumegi †♫
Renée Tatum †♫
Dale Travis †♫
Tamara Wapinsky †♫
Dolora Zajick †♫

Current Adler Fellows (2010)

Incoming:
Ryan Belongie ♫, *countertenor*
Susannah Biller ♫, *soprano*
Sara Gartland ♫, *soprano*
Brian Jagde ♫, *tenor*
Maya Lahyani ♫, *mezzo-soprano*
Tamara Sanikidze ♫, *apprentice coach*

Returning:
Leah Crocetto ♫, *soprano*
Austin Kness ♫, *baritone*
David Lomelí ♫, *tenor*
Allen Perriello ♫, *apprentice coach*

† Former Adler Fellow
‡ Current Adler Fellow
♫ Merola Opera Program graduate

Biographies

DAVID GOCKLEY

David Gockley became San Francisco Opera's (SFO) sixth general director on January 1, 2006, following in the footsteps of General Directors Gaetano Merola (1923–1953), Kurt Herbert Adler (1953–1981), Terence A. McEwen (1982–1988), Lotfi Mansouri (1988–2001) and Pamela Rosenberg (2001–2005). Considered one of the major innovators in American opera, Gockley came to San Francisco from Houston Grand Opera (HGO), the organization that he led for more than three decades. Gockley transformed HGO from a small regional company into one of the leading opera companies in the United States by a bold mixture of traditional and adventurous repertoire, the application of modern technology to reach new audiences, artistic excellence and solid financial governance. A self-described "progressive traditionalist," he is passionately committed to the premise that opera is a living art form that speaks to a variety of audiences.

Gockley is recognized for being a risk-taker, for mounting dynamic theatrical productions and exploring daring artistic ideas, and for balancing new, progressive productions with traditional operatic repertoire. Under his leadership, San Francisco Opera (SFO) has already presented two world premieres and two West Coast premieres. In the fall of 2007, SFO presented *Appomattox*, commissioned from composer Philip Glass and librettist Christopher Hampton. In the fall of 2008, the Company unveiled composer Stewart Wallace and Bay Area novelist Amy Tan's *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, based on her best-selling novel of the same title. SFO also presented the West Coast premieres of Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince* and Jake Heggie's chamber opera *Three Decembers.* SFO began its presentation of a new production of Wagner's epic four-opera cycle, *Der Ring des Nibelungen,* in 2008 with *Das Rheingold.* The second installment of the cycle, *Die Walküre,* is presented in the summer of 2010 and the full presentation of the cycle will be given in June 2011. San Francisco Opera Artistic Adviser Francesca Zambello directs this *Ring* cycle and Donald Runnicles conducts.

Gockley is committed to broadening and diversifying audiences for San Francisco Opera, and during his first months as general director he took opera to the center of the community with a free outdoor simulcast—the first in the Company's history—of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* in May 2006. Subsequent simulcasts included *Rigoletto* in October 2006, reaching 15,000 people in San Francisco and Stanford University's Frost Amphitheater; *Don Giovanni* in June 2007, which was broadcast to 7,000 people in four theaters across Northern California; and four simulcasts at AT&T Park—*Samson and Delilah* (September 2007, for an audience of 15,000), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (June 2008, for an audience of 23,000), *Tosca* (June 2009, for an audience of 27,000), and *Il Trovatore* (September 2009, for an audience of 25,000).

In 2007, Gockley led San Francisco Opera to take these innovations even further and created the Koret-Taube Media Suite. The first permanent high-definition broadcast-standard video production facility installed in any American opera house, the Koret-Taube Media Suite gives the Company the permanent capability to produce simulcasts and other projects including OperaVision, retractable screens providing full stage, close-up and mid-range ensemble shots in high-definition video for patrons in balcony seats. Gockley ushered in another first for San Francisco Opera in the spring of 2008 when the Company presented four operas in movie theaters across the country. These operas—*La Rondine, Samson and Delilah, Don Giovanni* and *Madama Butterfly*—are now available to theaters and performing arts venues as part of the Company's Grand Opera Cinema Series. In 2007 Gockley also launched radio partnerships with

San Francisco's Classical 102.1 KDFC and the WFMT Radio Network in Chicago, returning regular San Francisco Opera broadcasts to the national and international radio airwaves for the first time in 25 years.

Gockley joined Houston Grand Opera in 1970 as business manager, armed with both a musical background and a business degree from Columbia University. Two years later, at age 29, he became general director. Under his leadership, HGO received a Tony, two Emmy and two Grammy Awards; established the Houston Grand Opera Orchestra; and became America's leading commissioner and producer of new works. By 2006, HGO had 35 world premieres to its credit, including Thomas Pasatieri's *The Seagull* (1974); Carlisle Floyd's *Bilby's Doll* (1976) and *Cold Sassy Tree* (2000); Leonard Bernstein's *A Quiet Place* (1983); Mark Adamo's *Little Women* (1998) and *Lysistrata* (2005); John Adams's *Nixon in China* (1987); Sir Michael Tippet's *New Year* (1989); Meredith Monk's *ATLAS* (1991); Stewart Wallace's *Harvey Milk* (1995); Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas* (1996) and *Salsipuedes* (2004); Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince* (2003); and Jake Heggie's *The End of the Affair* (2004). Among the six American premieres presented during Gockley's tenure was the 1984 premiere of Philip Glass's *Akhnaten*. In 1975, HGO presented the first fully-staged production of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*. The next year, HGO restored George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* to the American operatic repertory with a landmark production that went on to win Tony and Grammy awards.

Gockley initiated international and national tours, taking HGO to Broadway, Europe, Japan and Egypt. In 1996, *Porgy and Bess* marked HGO's debut at Milan's La Scala and Paris's Opera Bastille. Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts,* directed by Robert Wilson, was featured at the inaugural Lincoln Center Festival '96 and the 50th Edinburgh International Festival. In 1988, HGO's world premiere production of *Nixon in China* also traveled to Edinburgh. Through Gockley's efforts, HGO began annual radio broadcasts on National Public Radio, the European Broadcast Union and Australian Broadcasting Corporation. A number of HGO's productions under Gockley, including *Willie Stark*, *Treemonisha, Little Women* and the Emmy award-winning *Nixon in China*, have been televised on PBS/WNET's *Great Performances* series. HGO's numerous recordings include *Treemonisha* (Deutsche Grammophon), *Porgy and Bess* (RCA), *Cold Sassy Tree* (Albany), *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Albany), Tod Machover's *Resurrection* (Albany), *Little Women* (Ondine/Koch), Bright Sheng's *Song of Majnun* (Delos), *ATLAS* (ECM) and the Grammy award-winning *Nixon in China* (Nonesuch).

Gockley's pioneering new innovations at HGO included the free outdoor "Plazacasts" of mainstage opera productions; the Multimedia Modular Stage, a stage system utilizing large projection screens to provide a sense of intimacy in large outdoor settings (similar to the stages used by rock bands, the design was the first of its kind for opera production); and OperaVision, a system of plasma and projection screens located in the upper levels of the theater to provide audiences with close-up shots and supertitles. In 1977, Gockley co-founded the Houston Grand Opera Studio to develop the talents of young singers with a potential for major careers in opera and musical theater. The program has helped to nurture the careers of Joyce DiDonato, Denyce Graves, Eric Halfvarson, Susanne Mentzer and many others. One of the crowning achievements of Gockley's tenure was the 1987 opening of Wortham Theater Center, HGO's home. The $72-million performing arts center was built entirely with private funds.

David Gockley was born in Philadelphia in 1943 and grew up in Wayne, Pennsylvania. His father was an athletic coach and inspired his early love for sports. From his mother he inherited a passion for music. He pursued vocal studies at Boston's New England Conservatory

and then studied conducting and composition at Brown University, where he received a bachelor's degree in 1965. In 1970, he received a master's degree from Columbia University Business School, which also named him the first recipient of the Dean's Award for "Distinguished Professional Achievement." Gockley's alma mater, Brown University, awarded him an honorary doctorate of fine arts in 1993 and, in 1995, recognized him with the William Rogers Award for outstanding professional achievement and extraordinary service to humanity. Gockley has served as president of OPERA America. He is the father of two daughters, Meredith and Lauren, and a son, Adam.

NICOLA LUISOTTI

Italian conductor Nicola Luisotti, music director of San Francisco Opera and principal guest conductor of the Tokyo Symphony, made his international debut in 2002 leading a new production of *Il Trovatore* at the Stuttgart State Theater. His career trajectory since then can only be described as meteoric, with engagements in the world's major opera houses and concert halls.

Maestro Luisotti made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2005 conducting *La Forza del Destino* and, following the announcement of his appointment as music director in 2007, he returned to the Company in November 2008 for critically acclaimed performances of *La Bohème.* In his inaugural season as music director, Luisotti has already conducted acclaimed performances of *Il Trovatore, Salome,* and *Otello* this past fall, and he leads *La Fanciulla del West* in the summer of 2010.

He has garnered enthusiastic praise from critics and audiences 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 Tokyo's Suntory Hall, and *Aida* at the Royal Opera. In future seasons, he returns to the podium at Milan's Teatro alla Scala and the Metropolitan Opera, among others.

Equally at home on the concert stage, Maestro Luisotti has established growing relationships with the orchestras of Tokyo (NHK Symphony, Tokyo Symphony), London (Philharmonia Orchestra), Genoa, Budapest, Munich (Bavarian Radio Orchestra), Rome (Santa Cecilia Orchestra), Zagreb, Sofia, and Hamburg. In conjunction with the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, Luisotti led special concerts in Beijing featuring artists Renée Fleming, Sumi Jo, Ramón Vargas, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky. He made his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic conducting Dvorák's Requiem in December 2007 and will return to lead the orchestra in future seasons. Luisotti made successful debuts with the orchestras of San Francisco, London, and Atlanta in 2009, and his upcoming orchestral engagements include concerts with orchestras of Milan, Turin, and Frankfurt.

The conductor's expanding discography includes a complete recording of *Stiffelio* (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 *La Bohème,* starring Angela Gheorghiu and Ramón Vargas (EMI).

Born in the Tuscan city of Viareggio and raised nearby, Luisotti began studying music as a child, with lessons on the church organ; by age eleven he was the director of the church choir. He later trained as a pianist, with secondary degrees in composition, trumpet, and voice. Following completion of his formal study, Luisotti's first professional years were spent working in Milan, where he was a rehearsal pianist for La Scala, and in Florence, where he served as a member of the chorus of the Maggio Musicale Festival. His earliest full-time position was as chorus master for La Fenice in Venice.

FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO

An internationally recognized director of opera and theater, Francesca Zambello was appointed artistic adviser for San Francisco Opera in 2006. She began her long association with the Company in 1983 as assistant stage director for *Ariadne auf Naxos* and has since been involved in seventeen productions here, including *Boris Godunov, Anna Bolena, La Traviata,* Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine, Don Giovanni*, and *Porgy and Bess* among others.

Zambello's American debut took place at Houston Grand Opera with a production of *Fidelio* in 1984. She made her debut in Europe at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice with *Beatrice di Tenda* in 1987 and has since staged new productions at major theaters and opera houses in Europe and the United States. Collaborating with outstanding artists and promoting emerging talent, she takes a special interest in new music theater works, innovative productions and in producing theater and opera for wider audiences. Francesca Zambello holds the title of *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* by the French government for her contribution to French culture and is a recipient of the Russian Federation's medal for service to culture. Other honors for her work include three Olivier Awards from the London Society of Theaters and two *Evening Standard* Awards for "Best Musical" and "Best Opera"; she has also received an *Evening Standard* Award for "Best Company Achievement." The French *Grand Prix des Critiques* was awarded to her twice for her work at Paris Opera. Other awards include "Best Production" in Japan, the *Palme d'Or* in Germany, the Golden Mask in Russia, and the Helpmann Award in Australia.

Opera works in recent seasons have included the world premiere of *An American Tragedy, Cyrano,* and *Les Troyens* for the Metropolitan Opera; *Porgy and Bess* and *Der Ring des Nibelungen* for Washington National Opera; *La Bohème* at London's Royal Albert Hall; *The Fiery Angel* for the Bolshoi Theatre; *Salome* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Carmen, Don Giovanni* and *The Tsarina's Slippers* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; and *Boris Godunov, War and Peace, Billy Budd* and *William Tell* at the Paris Opera.

Recent theater projects have included *Showboat* at Royal Albert Hall and Carnegie Hall; a new musical, *Rebecca,* for Vienna's Raimund Theater; *Tibet Through the Red Box,* a new play by David Henry Hwang for the Seattle Children's Theatre; *The Little Prince* with Oscar-winning composer Rachel Portman; and *Napoleon* in London's West End. Other recent works have included a film of Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* for BBC Television, as well as a new film for the BBC, Sony and PBS of *The Little Prince*, and *West Side Story* for the floating stage in Bregenz. Zambello recently directed *The Little Mermaid* for Disney on Broadway and *The Little House on the Prairie,* by Rachel Portman and Rachel Sheinkin currently on a national tour;

further opera works include completing Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* for San Francisco Opera and Washington National Opera.

An American who grew up in Europe, Zambello speaks French, Italian, German and Russian. She attended Moscow University in 1976 and graduated from Colgate University. She began her career as an assistant director to the late Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, and from 1984 to 1991 she was the artistic director of the Skylight Music Theater. Francesca Zambello lives in New York and London.

ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

San Francisco Opera is the second largest opera company in North America. Gaetano Merola and Kurt Herbert Adler were the Company's first two general directors. Merola led the Company from its founding in 1923 until his death in 1953; Adler headed the organization from 1953 through 1981. Legendary for both their conducting and managerial skills, these two leaders established a formidable institution that is internationally recognized as one of the top opera companies in the world and heralded for its first-rate productions and roster of international opera stars. Following Adler's tenure, the Company was headed by three visionary leaders: Terence A. McEwen (1982–1988), Lotfi Mansouri (1988–2001), and Pamela Rosenberg (2001–2005). Originally presented over two weeks, the Company's season now contains approximately seventy-five performances of ten operas between September and July.

In 2007, San Francisco Opera celebrated the 75th anniversary of its performing home, the War Memorial Opera House. The venerable beaux arts building was inaugurated on October 15, 1932 and holds the distinction of being the first American opera house that was not built by and for a small group of wealthy patrons; the funding came thanks to a group of private citizens who encouraged thousands of San Franciscans to subscribe.

David Gockley became San Francisco Opera's sixth general director in January of 2006 after more than three decades at the helm of Houston Grand Opera. During his first months as general director, Gockley took opera to the center of the community with a free outdoor simulcast—the first in the Company's history—of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* in May 2006. Subsequent simulcasts included *Rigoletto* in October 2006, reaching 15,000 people in San Francisco and Stanford University's Frost Amphitheater; *Don Giovanni* in June 2007, which was broadcast to 7,000 people in four theaters across Northern California; and four simulcasts at AT&T Park—*Samson and Delilah* (September 2007, for an audience of 15,000), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (June 2008, for an audience of 23,000), *Tosca* (June 2009, for an audience of 27,000), and *Il Trovatore* (September 2009, for an audience of 25,000).

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San Francisco's Classical 102.1 KDFC and the WFMT Radio Network in Chicago, returning regular San Francisco Opera broadcasts to the national and international radio airwaves for the first time in 25 years.

San Francisco Opera's first two general directors, Merola and Adler, regularly conducted for the first six decades of the Company's history. In 1985, the Company appointed Sir John Pritchard as its first permanent music director, and he was followed by Donald Runnicles in 1992. During his tenure, Runnicles has championed new repertory ranging from the world premieres of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic* (2005) to Conrad Susa's *The Dangerous Liaisons* (1994), in addition to the spectacular American stage premiere of Olivier Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise* (2002) and the West Coast premiere of Stewart Wallace's *Harvey Milk* (1996). After 17 years with San Francisco Opera, Maestro Runnicles stepped down as music director in the summer of 2009. He continues his relationship with the Company with *Die Walküre* in 2010 and the current *Ring* cycle in the 2010-11 season—exactly twenty years after his Company debut in this monumental work. Nicola Luisotti, a rising star in the opera world, succeeded Donald Runnicles as music director in the fall of 2009.

Born and raised in Italy, Maestro Luisotti made his international debut in 2002 leading a new production of *Il Trovatore* at the Stuttgart State Theater. He has since led productions at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden (*Il Trovatore*, *Madama Butterfly, Turandot*), the Metropolitan Opera (*Tosca*, *La Bohème*), the Vienna State Opera (*Simon Boccanegra*), Madrid's Teatro Real (*Il Trovatore*), Paris Opera (*Tosca*), the Canadian Opera Company (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice (*Il Viaggio a Reims*, *Simon Boccanegra*), Munich's Bavarian State Opera (*Tosca*) and Frankfurt Opera (*Il Trittico*). He made his debut in Japan with a staged production of *Tosca* at Suntory Hall and has established growing relationships with the orchestras of Zagreb, Sofia, Genoa, NHK, Tokyo Symphony, Munich's Bavarian Radio Orchestra and Rome's Santa Cecilia Orchestra. Luisotti also serves as principal guest conductor of the Tokyo Symphony.

Since its inception, San Francisco Opera has embodied a spirit of innovation by presenting the world premieres of *Blood Moon* (1961), *Angle of Repose* (1976), *The Dangerous Liaisons* (1994), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1998), *Dead Man Walking* (2000), *Arshak II* (2001) and *Doctor Atomic* (2005). Under the leadership of David Gockley, the Company has added two new operas to that list: Philip Glass and Christopher Hampton's *Appomattox* (2007) and Stewart Wallace and Amy Tan's *The Bonesetter's Daughter* (2008). Future planned commissions include works by Christopher Theofanidis, Mark Adamo, Jake Heggie and Jennifer Higdon.

San Francisco Opera offers a comprehensive array of acclaimed training programs and performance opportunities for young artists under the auspices of the San Francisco Opera Center and the Merola Opera Program (each a separate institution). Both are led by renowned soprano Sheri Greenawald.

For more information about San Francisco Opera, please visit ***sfopera.com.***

- SFO -
January 2010