



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S *LA BOHÈME*, *LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR*,
TOSCA AND *THE ELIXIR OF LOVE* TO AIR ON
KQED PUBLIC TELEVISION, SEPTEMBER 1–SEPTEMBER 22, 2011**

SAN FRANCISCO (August 17, 2011) San Francisco Opera returns to KQED Public Television 9, Northern California's preeminent public broadcast station, with a new series of grand operas recorded live in high definition at the historic War Memorial Opera House. Airing on Thursday evenings at 8 p.m. on KQED 9 beginning September 1, San Francisco Opera's productions of Puccini's *La Bohème* and *Tosca* and Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *The Elixir of Love* feature an array of international opera stars including Angela Gheorghiu, Piotr Beczala, Adrienne Pieczonka, Natalie Dessay and Ramón Vargas. The series is hosted by celebrated actor and director Joan Chen.

La Bohème, *Tosca*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *The Elixir of Love* are presented in their original languages with English subtitles. All productions feature the acclaimed San Francisco Opera Chorus and Orchestra. Each broadcast will be followed by numerous encore airings on KQED 9 and KQED Life over subsequent days. Visit kqed.org/sfopera or check local listings for a complete broadcast schedule.

San Francisco Opera's *Grand Opera Cinema Series* on KQED 9 begins on **September 1** with *La Bohème*, Giacomo Puccini's beloved and moving tale of starving artists falling in and out of love in 19th-century Paris. A seamless mix of romantic passion, poignant tragedy and high spirited fun, this opera boasts an outstanding cast featuring superstar Romanian soprano Angela Gheorghiu as the ill-fated Mimì and Polish tenor Piotr Beczala as her lover, the poet Rodolfo. Baritone Quinn Kelsey sings the role of Marcello and Musetta, his flirtatious and fickle lover, is sung by soprano Norah Amsellem. Nicola Luisotti, San Francisco Opera's music director and master of the Italian repertoire, conducts this beautiful San Francisco Opera production directed by Harry Silverstein.

Lucia di Lammermoor, Gaetano Donizetti's famed saga of a woman driven mad by her arranged marriage is presented on **September 8**. Celebrated French coloratura soprano Natalie Dessay, whose vocal agility and dramatic charisma have established her as one of the role's foremost interpreters, stars in the title role. Tenor Giuseppe Filianoti is Lucia's beloved Edgardo and baritone Gabriele Viviani is her brother, Enrico. The striking Teatro del Maggio Musicale production, conceived by director Graham Vick, is led by French conductor Jean-Yves Ossonce.

The series continues on **September 15** with Puccini's *Tosca*, a fierce melodrama set to magnificent music. This San Francisco Opera production brings to life a tempestuous world of cruelty and deception through the tragic story of Floria Tosca, a beautiful yet volatile singer; Mario Cavaradossi, the idealistic painter that she loves; and Baron Scarpia, an amoral police chief who uses his power to satisfy his lecherous appetite. Canadian soprano Adrienne Pieczonka appears in the title role opposite tenor Carlo Ventre as Cavaradossi and baritone Lado Ataneli as Baron Scarpia. Italian conductor Marco Armiliato leads the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus, and Jose Maria Condemni directs.

Gaetano Donizetti's boisterous comedy *The Elixir of Love* airs on **September 22**. A flirtatious tale of innocent love and boundless devotion, the opera tells the story of the shy, love-struck Nemorino as he naïvely relies on a "love potion" to help him win the heart of the beautiful Adina. In this charming production, director James Robinson ingeniously updates this classic Italian tale to the delightful innocence of a Napa Valley county fair circa 1915. Soprano Inva Mula and internationally renowned tenor Ramón Vargas headline a brilliant cast conducted by Bruno Campanella.

San Francisco Opera's *Grand Opera Cinema Series* on KQED Public Television coincides with the opening of the Company's 89th season on September 9, 2011. The cinema series is one of the many electronic media initiatives launched under the direction of General Director David Gockley. These include the Company's free live simulcasts, one of the first innovations of Gockley's tenure and part of the Company's mission to bring opera into the community. Since 2006, San Francisco Opera has presented eight free live simulcasts at venues throughout the Bay Area, including San Francisco's AT&T Park, for more than 150,000 people of all ages. San Francisco Opera's simulcasts and cinemacasts are made possible through the technology of the Company's Koret-Taube Media Suite, the first permanent HD broadcast-standard video production facility installed in an American opera house.

KQED (kqed.org) has served Northern California for more than 50 years and is affiliated with NPR and PBS. KQED owns and operates public television stations KQED 9 (San Francisco/Bay Area), KQED Plus (San Jose/Bay Area), and KQET 25 (Watsonville/Monterey); KQED Public Radio (88.5FM San Francisco and 89.3FM Sacramento); the interactive platforms kqed.org and KQEDnews.org; and KQED Education. KQED Public Television, one of the nation's most-watched public television stations, is the producer of local and national series such as *QUEST*; *Check, Please! Bay Area*; *This Week in Northern California*; *Truly CA*; and *Essential Pépin*. KQED's digital television channels include 9HD, KQED Life, KQED World, KQED Kids, and KQED V-me, and are available 24/7 on Comcast. KQED Public Radio, home of *Forum* with Michael Krasny and *The California Report*, is one of the most-listened-to public radio stations in the nation with an award-winning news and public affairs program service delivering more than eighteen local newscasts daily. KQED Interactive provides KQED's cross-platform news service, KQEDnews.org, as well as offers several popular local blogs, video and audio podcasts, and a live radio stream at kqed.org. KQED Education brings the impact of KQED to thousands of teachers, students, parents, and the general public through workshops, community screenings, and multimedia resources.

To view complete listing information about San Francisco Opera on KQED TV, visit <http://www.kqed.org/tv/programs/sfopera/schedule.jsp>. For more information about San Francisco Opera's *Grand Opera Cinema Series*, and to view video clips of these operas, visit <http://sfopera.com/Watch-Listen/Grand-Opera-Cinema-Series/Series-2.aspx>.

- SFO -

This press release and downloadable photographs of *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *The Elixir of Love* are available at sfopera.com/press.

For further press information, please contact San Francisco Opera Communications:
Jon Finck (415) 565-6472 / jfinck@sfopera.com
Robin Freeman (415) 565-6451 / rfreeman@sfopera.com