



**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA RETURNS TO  
STERN GROVE FESTIVAL AUGUST 21 WITH A CONCERT  
FEATURING MEZZO-SOPRANO DOLORA ZAJICK**

**Concert to Include Selections by Verdi, Donizetti, Puccini and Delibes**

SAN FRANCISCO (July 29, 2011) — San Francisco Opera returns to the beautiful outdoor setting of Sigmund Stern Grove on Sunday, August 21 at 2 p.m. for a concert of popular opera arias 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.

Legendary mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick, who most recently appeared with the Company as Amneris in 2010's *Aida*, appears with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in a musical program of arias by Giuseppe Verdi, Vincenzo Bellini, Pietro Mascagni and Francesco Cilea. A former member of the San Francisco Opera Center Adler Fellowship Program, Zajick will be joined by current Adler Fellows Leah Crocetto, Sara Gartland, Susannah Biller, Nadine Sierra, Maya Lahyani, Brian Jadge, Ao Li and Ryan Kuster singing selections by Gaetano Donizetti, Giacomo Puccini, Marc-Antoine Charpentier and Léo Delibes, among others. A pre-concert lecture will take place at 12 p.m. in Stern Grove's Trocadero Clubhouse.

San Francisco Opera Assistant Music Director Giuseppe Finzi leads the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in a program that includes selections from Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*; Verdi's *Macbeth*, *Il Trovatore* and *Rigoletto*; Bellini's *I Puritani* and *Norma*; Puccini's *Tosca*; Delibes's *Lakmé*; Charpentier's *Louise*; Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*; and Nieto and Giménez's *El Barbero de Sevilla*, among other selections.

San Francisco Opera's performance at Stern Grove Festival 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 [sterngrove.org](http://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 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Sloat Boulevard. A limited number of handicapped parking spaces are available at the 19<sup>th</sup> 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](http://sterngrove.org) or call (415) 252-6252.

### About the Artists

American dramatic mezzo-soprano **DOLORA ZAJICK**, a former Merola Opera Program participant and Adler Fellow, made her San Francisco Opera debut as the High Priestess in *Aida* in 1984, continuing in several leading roles here, including Azucena in *Il Trovatore* (1986, 1994, and 2003); Amneris in *Aida* (1989 and 2010); her first Marfa in *Khovanshchina* (1990); her first assumption of the title role of *Hérodiade* (1994); and the title role of *The Maid of Orleans* (2006). Her career has taken her to most of the major opera houses and festivals of the world in these and other roles such as Eboli (*Don Carlo*), Ulrica (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth*), Santuzza (*Cavalleria Rusticana*), Adalgisa (*Norma*), Léonor (*La Favorite*), and Dalila (*Samson et Dalila*). She has also appeared in concert with many of the world's foremost symphony orchestras and conductors. Among her recordings are *Aida*, *Il Trovatore*, *Don Carlo*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Rusalka*, *Hérodiade*, *Alexander Nevsky*, the Verdi Requiem and her first solo disc, *The Art of the Dramatic Mezzo-Soprano*. Recent engagements include her role debut as Ortrud (*Lohengrin*) at Los Angeles Opera; Amneris at Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, the Arena di Verona, the Metropolitan Opera, and concert performances with the Israel Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta; Adalgisa at the Met; Santuzza with Washington National Opera and the Met; Léonor with Teatro Municipal de Santiago de Chile; creating the role of Elvira Griffiths in the premiere of Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy* at the Met; Eboli with the Vienna State Opera and Los Angeles Opera; and Azucena in Chicago and Madrid.

San Francisco Opera Assistant Music Director **GIUSEPPE FINZI** made his Company debut in 2008 conducting *The Elixir of Love for Families* and *La Bohème* in 2008 and *The Abduction from the Seraglio* in 2009 as well as the Company's performance at the 2009 Stern Grove Festival; he conducted performances of *Faust*, *La Fanciulla del West*, and *Aida* in 2010. Finzi will return to San Francisco Opera in 2011 to conduct *Turandot* and *Carmen*. A native of Bari, Italy, he studied composition and conducting at Milan's Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory. Finzi has worked as an assistant conductor, coach, and pianist at Milan's La Scala, the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi in Florence, Siena's Accademia Chigiana, and Ravenna's Teatro Alighieri. He made his conducting debut in 2003 with *Tosca* at the Teatro Rendano in Cosenza and returned in 2004 for *La Traviata*. Finzi has since led productions of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Madama Butterfly* in Catanzaro, *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata* in Tirana, *L'Elisir d'Amore* in Foggia, and *Carmen* in Calabria and Fidenza. His recent engagements include *Così fan tutte* in Brindisi, Milan's Piccolo Teatro, and at Tokyo's Kunitachi University.

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For further press information, please visit [sfopera.com/press](http://sfopera.com/press) or contact Robin Freeman at (415) 565-6451 / [rfreeman@sfopera.com](mailto:rfreeman@sfopera.com).