SAN FRANCISCO OPERA PRESENTS BELLINI'S *I CAPULETI E I MONTECCHI*
STARRING JOYCE DiDONATO AND NICOLE CABELL
SEPTEMBER 29–OCTOBER 19, WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE

CONDUCTED BY RICCARDO FRIZZA AND DIRECTED BY VINCENT BOUSSARD

NEW PRODUCTION DESIGNED BY VINCENT LEMAIRE
WITH COSTUMES BY CHRISTIAN LACROIX

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT 415-864-3330 OR SFOPERA.COM

SAN FRANCISCO (September 13, 2012)—San Francisco Opera presents Vincenzo Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (*The Capulets and the Montagues*) at the War Memorial Opera House in a new co-production with Munich's Bavarian State Opera. Opening on September 29 with five subsequent performances through October 19, this bel canto gem features Joyce DiDonato and Nicole Cabell as the helpless lovers Romeo and Giulietta. Albanian tenor Saimir Pirgu makes his Company and role debut as Tebaldo, baritone Ao Li is Lorenzo and bass-baritone Eric Owens is Capellio. Directed by Vincent Boussard and led by returning conductor Riccardo Frizza, this production features costumes by renowned fashion designer Christian Lacroix and sets by Vincent Lemaire.

Bellini's bel canto masterpiece *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, inspired by the tragic tale of Romeo and Juliet, is what *The New York Times* calls "an opera of definite dramatic appeal." The cast is headlined by international stars Joyce DiDonato and Nicole Cabell as the ill-fated lovers Romeo and Giulietta. DiDonato, who wowed San Francisco audiences in her 2007 role debut as Octavian in *Der*

Rosenkavalier and in a 2009 recital for San Francisco Performances, returns as Romeo, a role she has previously performed at Paris Opera and will reprise later this season in Munich. Recent career highlights for the Merola Opera Program alumna include Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia,* the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Sycorax in *The Enchanted Island* at the Metropolitan Opera; the title role of *La Cenerentola* and Rosina at Milan's La Scala; and Idamanate in *Idomeneo*, Cenerentola, Dejanira in *Hercules*, the title role of *Ariodante,* and Béatrice in *Béatrice et Bénédict* with Paris Opera. DiDonato's extensive discography includes complete recordings of *Alcina, La Cenerentola, Radamisto, Benvenuto Cellini,* and three solo albums, including her 2012 Grammy Award-winning release, *Diva Divo*, which includes the aria "Ascolta! Se Romeo t'uccise un figlio...La tremenda ultrice spada" from *I Capuleti e i Montecchi.*

BBC Cardiff Singer of the World–winner Nicole Cabell makes her role debut as Giulietta in this production. The American soprano, who also makes her San Francisco Opera debut in these performances, has recently appeared as Countess Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Montreal Opera, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* in Tokyo and Leïla in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* at the Santa Fe Opera. Other recent career highlights include Micaëla in *Carmen* at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Deutsche Oper Berlin; Leïla with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Lyric Opera of Chicago; Donna Elvira with Oper Köln and Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Musetta in *La Bohème* at the Met, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Covent Garden, Washington National Opera, the Santa Fe Opera and in Buenos Aires.

Albanian tenor and winner of both the 2002 Enrico Caruso and Tito Schipa Competitions, Saimir Pirgu makes his Company and role debut as Tebaldo. Other career highlights include Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at Milan's La Scala; Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at Hamburg State Opera; the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* and Alfredo Germont in *La Traviata* in Zurich; Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* at Los Angeles Opera; and Edgardo with Washington National Opera.

Fresh from his critically acclaimed portrayal of Alberich in the Metropolitan Opera's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Eric Owens returns to San Francisco Opera as Capellio. The American Bass-baritone has previously performed at San Francisco Opera as Porgy in *Porgy and Bess,* General Leslie Groves in the world premiere of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic,* the King of Scotland in *Ariodante*, Ramfis in *Aida*, Lodovico in *Otello* and Don Fernando in *Fidelio*. Chinese baritone Ao Li is a second-year Adler Fellow and makes his role debut as Lorenzo in this production. He has previously performed with San Francisco Opera as Ascanio Petrucci in *Lucrezia Borgia* and as Le Dancaïre in *Carmen for Families*.

Directed by Vincent Boussard in his U.S. debut and led by returning conductor and bel canto specialist Riccardo Frizza, this new co-production, which received its debut in Munich in March 2011, has sets created by French opera, theater and dance designer Vincent Lemaire. The production features stunning costumes by renowned fashion designer Christian Lacroix, a frequent collaborator with Boussard and a prominent fashion icon known for both his couture house and his theater, ballet and opera costumes.

Sung in Italian with English supertitles, the six performances of *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* are scheduled for September 29 (8 p.m.), October 3 (7:30 p.m.), October 11 (7:30 p.m.), October 14 (2 p.m.), October 16 (8 p.m.), and October 19 (8 p.m.), 2012.

San Francisco Opera Guild will present an Insight Panel Discussion featuring members of the cast and production team from *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. The discussion will take place on Monday, September 24 at 6 p.m. in the Green Room at the War Memorial Veterans Building (401 Van Ness Avenue). 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.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets for performances of Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* at the War Memorial Opera House are priced from $22 to $340 and may be purchased at sfopera.com or through the San Francisco Opera Box Office [301 Van Ness Avenue (at Grove Street), 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.

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 *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and San Francisco Opera's 2012–13 season, please visit sfopera.com.

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I CAPULETI E I MONTECCHI by Vincenzo Bellini
(THE CAPULETS AND THE MONTAGUES)

PRODUCTION NEW TO SAN FRANCISCO
September 29 (8 p.m.); **October 3**• (7:30 p.m.), **11**• (7:30 p.m.), **14**• (2 p.m.), **16** (8 p.m.), **19** (8 p.m.), **2012**

Co-production with Bavarian State Opera, Munich

Libretto by Felice Romani
Approximate running time: 2 hours, 40 minutes with one intermission
Sung in Italian with English supertitles

First Performance:	Venice, March 11, 1830
First SFO Performance:	September 1991
Most Recent SFO Performances:	September 1991

Cast:

Giulietta (*Juliet*)	**Nicole Cabell*♪**
Romeo	**Joyce DiDonato**
Tebaldo (*Tybalt*)	**Saimir Pirgu*♪**
Capellio	**Eric Owens**
Lorenzo	**Ao Li†**

Production Team:

Conductor	**Riccardo Frizza**
Director	**Vincent Boussard*^**
Set Designer	**Vincent Lemaire*^**
Costume Designer	**Christian Lacroix***
Lighting Designer	**Guido Levi*^**
Chorus Director	**Ian Robertson**

* San Francisco Opera Debut † Current Adler Fellow ♪ Role Debut ^ U.S. Debut ● OperaVision Performance

Opera Guild Insight Panel Discussion
Monday, September 24, 6 p.m.
Green Room, 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco

San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn, Franklin and Catherine Johnson, Mrs. Edmund W. Littlefield, Bernard and Barbro Osher, and Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem. San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by a grant from Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.

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I Capuleti e i Montecchi is made possible, in part, by Company Sponsors John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn. Ms. DiDonato's appearance is made possible by a gift to the Great Singers Fund by Joan and David Traitel.

OperaVision, high-definition projection screens featured in the Balcony, is made possible by the Koret-Taube Media Suite.

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2012–13 Season Sponsor

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

NICOLE CABELL (Giulietta), the 2005 winner of the BBC Singer of the World Competition in Cardiff and a Decca recording artist, makes her San Francisco Opera debut this fall. Her solo debut album, *Soprano* was named "Editor's Choice" by *Gramophone* and has several prestigious awards, including the 2007 Georg Solti Orphée d'Or from the French Académie du Disque Lyrique and an Echo Klassik Award in Germany. The American soprano's recent engagements include Countess Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) with Montreal Opera, Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) in Tokyo, Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*) with Palm Beach Opera, and Leïla (*Les Pêcheurs de Perles*) at the Santa Fe Opera. Other recent career highlights include Micaëla (*Carmen*) at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Deutsche Oper Berlin; Leïla with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Lyric Opera of Chicago; Donna Elvira with Oper Köln and the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Musetta (*La Bohème*) at the Met, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Covent Garden, Washington National Opera, the Santa Fe Opera, and in Buenos Aires; Adina (*L'Elisir d'Amore*) and Countess Almaviva at the Lyric Opera of Chicago; and Pamina and Adina at the Met. On the concert stage, Cabell has appeared as a soloist with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, and the orchestras of London, Munich, Lyon, Oslo, Copenhagen, Prague, and Frankfurt, among other cities.

JOYCE DiDONATO (Romeo) made her San Francisco Opera debut as Rosina (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) and returned in 2007 to sing her first Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*). The Merola Opera Program alumna has soared to international prominence in operas by Rossini, Handel, and Mozart, as well as in high-profile world premieres. Recent career highlights include Cherubino (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Rosina, L'Isoler (*Le Comte Ory*), the Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) and Sycorax (*The Enchanted Island*) at the Metropolitan Opera; the title role of *La Cenerentola* and Rosina at Milan's La Scala; Idamanate (*Idomeneo*), Cenerentola, Dejanira (*Hercules*), Elena (*La Donna del Lago*), the title role of *Ariodante,* and Béatrice (*Béatrice et Bénédict*) with Paris Opera; Rosina with the Vienna State Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin; Octavian at Madrid's Teatro Real; the title role of *Cendrillon,* Rosina, and Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Cherubino with Lyric Opera of Chicago; Sister Helen Prejean (Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*), and the title role of *Maria Stuarda* with Houston Grand Opera. DiDonato's extensive discography includes complete recordings of *Alcina, La Cenerentola,*

Radamisto, Benvenuto Cellini, and three solo albums. The Kansas native is an alumna of both the Houston Grand Opera Studio and the Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Program, and she is a past winner of the Richard Tucker Award; the "Singer of the Year" award from the Royal Philharmonic Society of London; and the Beverly Sills Award from the Metropolitan Opera.

Winner of both the 2002 Enrico Caruso and Tito Schipa Competitions, Albanian tenor **SAIMIR PIRGU** (Tebaldo) makes his San Francisco Opera debut this season. Recent engagements include Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) at Milan's La Scala; Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) and Nemorino (*L'Elisir d'Amore*) at Hamburg State Opera; the Duke of Mantua (*Rigoletto*) and Alfredo Germont (*La Traviata*) in Zurich; Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) at Los Angeles Opera; and Edgardo with Washington National Opera. Other career highlights include Nemorino at the Vienna State Opera and in Rome; the title role of *Idomeneo* in Graz and Zurich; Ferrando in Ferrara, Toulouse, and the Salzburg and Ravinia Festivals; Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) in Vienna, Zurich, and Ancona; Alfredo Germont at the Santa Fe Opera, Hamburg State Opera, Florence's Maggio Musicale Festival, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*) with the Metropolitan Opera, Paris Opera, and Los Angeles Opera; Rodolfo (*La Bohème*) in Bern; Edgardo in Hamburg; Christian (*Cyrano de Bergerac*) at the Paris Théâtre du Châtelet; and Fenton (*Falstaff*) in Zurich and Vienna. Pirgu's other recent and upcoming engagements include Vaudémont (*Iolanta*) and Paolo (*Francesca da Rimini*) at the Theater an der Wien; Rodolfo in Barcelona; Alfredo Germont in Berlin, New York, and Vienna; the Duke of Mantua in London; Don Ottavio in Paris; and Fernand (*La Favorite*) in Toulouse.

A native of China, **AO LI** (Lorenzo) made his San Francisco Opera debut last season as of Ascanio Petrucci (*Lucrezia Borgia*) and returned as Le Dancaïre (*Carmen for Families*). The baritone is a second-year Adler Fellow and 2010 Merola Opera Program alumnus, where he sang the role of Belcore in their production of *L'Elisir d'Amore.* A frequent recitalist in China, Li is a past recipient of the prestigious Youth of China award, third prize in both the Shandong Qilu Style Contest and the Taipei World Chinese Vocal Competition, the bronze award in The People's Republic of China Ministry of Culture's Eighth National Vocal Competition, and he was selected as a member of the Young Singer in Shandong Province Tenth Television Competition, where he won an Award of Excellence. He appears with the Company later this fall as Sciarrone in *Tosca.*

ERIC OWENS (Capellio) made his San Francisco Opera debut as Lodovico (*Otello*) in 2002. He returned to the Company in 2005, creating the role of General Leslie Groves in the world premiere of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic.* Other San Francisco Opera appearances include Don Fernando (*Fidelio*), the King of Scotland (*Ariodante*), his role debut as Porgy in *Porgy and Bess*, and Ramfis (*Aida*). Owens toured Vienna, San Francisco, Berlin, London, and Los Angeles as the Storyteller in Adams's *The Flowering Tree*, a role written expressly for him. Additional performances of Adams's work include *The Wound Dresser* at the BBC Proms and with the American Composers Orchestra at New York's Carnegie Hall; *El Niño* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra; and Leslie Groves at Netherlands Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Metropolitan Opera. The American bass-baritone's recent engagements include Alberich (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) at the Met; Amonasro (*Aida*); the title role of Handel's *Hercules* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; the Doctor (*Wozzeck*) at the Santa Fe Opera; and Lodovico with the Chicago Symphony both in Chicago and at Carnegie Hall. The artist's growing discography includes scenes from Strauss's *Elektra* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Telarc); the Grammy Award-winning *Doctor Atomic* (Sony Classical); *A Flowering Tree* (Nonesuch); and the world premiere recording of *Jackie O* (Argo).

Italian conductor **RICCARDO FRIZZA** made his San Francisco Opera debut with last season's *Lucrezia Borgia.* His recent appearances include *Armida, Il Trovatore,* and *Rigoletto* at the Metropolitan Opera; *Il Turco in Italia* in Berlin; *L'Elisir d'Amore* in Amsterdam; *Otello* in Tokyo; *Il Trovatore* in Venice; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Anna Bolena,* and *L'Elisir d'Amore* with Dresden's Saxon State Opera; *Luisa Miller* and *Don Carlos* in Bilbao; and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Vienna. Frizza served as conductor in residence for the Symphonic Orchestra of Brescia

from 1994 to 2000. Other credits include *Die Zauberflöte* at Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice, *Don Giovanni* at Theater an der Wien, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in Bilbao, *La Fille du Régiment* at Houston Grand Opera, *La Cenerentola* at the Bavarian State Opera, *Luisa Miller* in Leipzig, and *Aida* at Tokyo's New National Theatre and Seattle Opera. Frizza has led many orchestras in Europe and Asia, including Florence's Maggio Musicale Orchestra, Rome's Academia di Santa Cecilia, London's Philharmonia Orchestra, the Bavarian State Opera, the Radio Symphony of Vienna, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic, and the Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, among others. His many recordings include Martinů's *Mirandolina* (Supraphon), *La Fille du Régiment* (Decca), Verdi's *Nabucco* (TDK, also on DVD), and Rossini's *Tancredi* (TDK). Upcoming engagements include *La Cenerentola* with Paris Opera, Verdi's *La Scala di Seta* in Zurich, *Oberto* with Milan's La Scala, *Otello* in Frankfurt, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Munich, and *Attila* in Vienna.

French director **VINCENT BOUSSARD** (Director) makes his United States debut with a production he directed at Munich's Bavarian State Opera. His career highlights include *Dido and Aeneas* in Caen, France; Handel's *Theodora* in Bilbao; *Il Re Pastore* in Brussels, Luxembourg, Como, Pavia, and at the Innsbruck Festival; Cavalli's *Eliogabalo* in Brussels and Innsbruck; Menotti's *Maria Golovin* in Marseilles and Italy's Spoleto Festival; *Don Giovanni* in Innsbruck and Baden-Baden; Mernier's *Frühlingserwachen* in Brussels and Strasbourg; *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Aix-en-Provence and Luxembourg; and Handel's *Floridante* in Halle. Recent and upcoming engagements include *Louise* in Strasbourg, *Hamlet* at Marseille Opera, *Agrippina* and *Candide* at the Berlin State Opera, *Dido and Aeneas* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, *Carmen* at the Stockholm Opera, *Adriana Lecouvreur* at Frankfurt Opera, *Salome* at the Theater St. Gallen, *La Finta Giardiniera* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and *Madama Butterfly* at Hamburg State Opera. In collaboration with William Christie, Vincent Boussard has been involved in the young artists' program of Les Arts Florissants, the *Jardin des Voix*. Furthering his commitment towards young singers, he has also collaborated with opera studios at the Escuela Reina Sofia in Madrid, at the Vlaamse Opera Studio in Ghent, at the Chapelle Musicale Reine Elisabeth in Brussels, and at the Opera Studio of Lyon Opera.

VINCENT LEMAIRE (Set Designer) has worked internationally as a set designer for opera, theater, and dance since his professional debut in 1991 and makes his United States debut with San Francisco Opera this season. His designs for opera have been seen at Lyon Opera, Marseille Opera, Zurich Opera, the Strasbourg Festival, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, Italy's Spoleto Festival, Luxembourg Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm. Recent engagements include *Così fan tutte, L'Enfant et les Sortilèges,* and Mernier's *Frühlings Erwachen* in Brussels and *Don Giovanni* in Innsbruck and Baden-Baden. His production of *La Bohème* for Zurich Opera was also released as a film internationally. Lemaire is a frequent collaborator with director Vincent Boussard, most recently on productions of *Candide* and *Agrippina* for Berlin State Opera, *Carmen* in Stockholm, *La Finta Giardiniera* in Aix-en-Provence, Charpentier's *Louise* in Strasbourg, and *Hamlet* in Marseilles. Upcoming engagements include *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* in Strasbourg, *Radamisto* in Vienna, and *Madama Butterfly* in Hamburg.

A native of Arles, French fashion designer **CHRISTIAN LACROIX** (Costume Designer) studied art history and historical costume design in Montpellier and Paris, with the aspiration of being a museum curator. He began his professional career in fashion with Hermès and presented his first haute-couture collection in 1981 under the Jean Patou label to wide acclaim. Lacroix opened his own haute-couture house in 1987, the first to be opened in Paris in two decades, and launched his first ready-to-wear and accessories collections in 1989. Known for his theatrical style—cinema, theater, and opera have been influences since his childhood—and bold use of color, Lacroix is the creator of the "le pouf" dress and has expanded his career into interior design, cosmetics, and costumes for ballet, theater, and opera. He began designing opera costumes in 2003 with a production of *Il Re Pastore* at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels and has since created costumes for more than fifteen productions, including *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Così fan tutte,* also in Brussels; *Roméo et*

Juliette at Paris's Opéra-Comique; *Aida* in Cologne; *Don Pasquale* for Paris Opera; and *Adriana Lecouvreur* in Frankfurt. Upcoming opera projects include *Madama Butterfly* in Hamburg and *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* in Strasbourg.

Lighting designer GUIDO LEVI makes his United States debut with San Francisco Opera this season. Following his professional debut in 1974 at Turin's Teatro Stabile, Levi has designed lighting at venues across Europe, including Venice's La Fenice, Milan's La Scala, the Teatro Comunale in Bologne, the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, among others. Recent career highlights include *La Finta Giardiniera* in Aix-en-Provence, *Salome* in Saint Gall, *Cendrillon* with Paris Opera, *Aida* at Palermo's Teatro Massimo, *Hamlet* in Marseille, *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Biobao, and *Agrippina* at Berlin State Opera, among others.

Recipient of the 2012 San Francisco Opera Medal, IAN ROBERTSON has been chorus director and conductor with San Francisco Opera since 1987, having prepared more than 300 productions for the Company. He was awarded the Olivier Messiaen Foundation Prize in 2003 for his artistic contribution to the preparation of the Company's North American premiere of *Saint François d'Assise*. Robertson made his San Francisco Opera conducting debut with *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and has since led performances of *Falstaff*, *Lohengrin*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Don Carlo*, *Turandot*, *Il Trovatore*, and *La Bohème*. Other North American opera credits include productions with Sarasota Opera, Edmonton Opera, and Philadelphia's Curtis Opera Theatre. Before joining San Francisco Opera, Robertson was head of music and chorus director of Scottish Opera. He is currently the artistic director of the San Francisco Festival Chorale and the San Francisco Boys Chorus. A 2009 trip with the San Francisco Boys Chorus took him to the inauguration of the President of the United States, and last summer he led performances with the Boys Chorus in St. Petersburg and Copenhagen.

For further press information or to obtain 2012–13 Season–related photographs, please visit sfopera.com/press or contact:
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