



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA AND CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENT WORLD PREMIERE OF NOLAN GASSER AND CAREY HARRISON'S THE SECRET GARDEN MARCH 1–10, ZELLERBACH HALL, UC BERKELEY

INTERACTIVE FAMILY WORKSHOPS PRESENTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH SELECT PERFORMANCES

RELATED ANCILLARY EVENTS PRESENTED THROUGHOUT THE BAY AREA

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

SAN FRANCISCO (February 8, 2012)—San Francisco Opera and Cal Performances present the world premiere of composer Nolan Gasser and librettist Carey Harrison's *The Secret Garden*, a new opera commissioned by San Francisco Opera and based on the beloved children's novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Opening Friday, March 1, 2013 at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall with four subsequent performances through March 10, this new opera will be conducted by Sara Jobin, directed by Jose Maria Condemi and will feature scenic visual designs by Naomie Kremer.

In conjunction with the world premiere of *The Secret Garden*, San Francisco Opera and Cal Performances' education departments will present workshops prior to the March 2 and 9 performances as well as an Artist's Talk prior to the March 1 performance. The San Francisco Public Library will host an event with Nolan Gasser to explore the opera's journey from page to stage; the

University of California Botanical Garden in Berkeley offers a family walk of the secret spots in their garden; and the San Francisco Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park will present an array of related activities, including a scavenger hunt, a special map of secrets in the garden, story time, and a workshop on designing small garden spaces. For a full list of *The Secret Garden* ancillary activities, see the listing at the end of this release.

Commissioned by San Francisco Opera, The Secret Garden was created for the entire family and tells the tale of a pampered and priveleged young girl who finds herself alone in a bleak and unfamiliar land, until she discovers the hidden wonder of an abandoned secret garden. Soprano Sarah Shafer stars as Mary Lennox, alongside tenor Scott Joiner as Dickon Sowerby, 14-year-old tenor Michael Kepler Meo as Colin Craven, bass-baritone Philippe Sly as Archibald Craven and mezzosoprano Laura Krumm as Martha Sowerby.

Composer, pianist and musicologist Nolan Gasser makes his San Francisco Opera debut with *The Secret Garden*. Other upcoming projects include *Benny and Joon*, a musical in partnership with MGM On Stage and a forthcoming book on musical taste and the interrelation of music and science. Gasser's *Sonoma Overture*, an orchestral work commissioned by the Santa Rosa Symphony, recently had its premiere at the grand opening of Weill Hall at the Green Music Center at Sonoma State University. Librettist, playwright and author Carey Harrison is the author of 35 stage plays and 16 novels, most notably *Richard's Feet*—winner of the Encore Award from the U.K. Society of Authors. Conductor Sara Jobin returns to conduct members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Jose Maria Condemi, artistic director of Opera Santa Barbara, directs. This new production is designed by painter and multi-media artist Naomie Kremer and features costumes designed by Kristi Johnson and lighting designed by Christopher Maravich.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Sung in English with English supertitles, the five performances of *The Secret Garden* are scheduled for March 1 (7:30 p.m.), March 2 (7:30 p.m.), March 3 (3 p.m.), March 9 (7:30 p.m.), and March 10 (3 p.m.), 2013.

Tickets for performances of Nolan Gasser and Carey Harrison's The Secret Garden at Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley are priced from \$30 to \$80 for adults and \$15 to \$40 for children up to 18 years old. Tickets for the March 2 and 9 workshops are \$5 per person, regardless of age. Tickets 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) 864-33301. Tickets can also be purchased through Cal Performances' Box Office [Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus, by phone at (510) 642-9988 or online at calperformances.org].

Casting, programs, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change. For further information about The Secret Garden and San Francisco Opera's 2012–13 season, please visit sfopera.com.

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THE SECRET GARDEN by Nolan Gasser and Carey Harrison WORLD PREMIERE

Commissioned by San Francisco Opera Co-production with Cal Performances

Music by Nolan Gasser*; libretto by Carey Harrison* Based on the book by Frances Hodgson Burnett Approximate running time: 2 hours with one intermission Sung in English with English supertitles

March 1 (7:30 p.m.), 2 (7:30 p.m.), 3 (3 p.m.), 9 (7:30 p.m.), 10 (3 p.m.), 2013

Zellberbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley

Cast:

Mary Lennox Sarah Shafer* Colin Craven Michael Kepler Meo* Philippe Sly*† Archibald Craven Dickon Sowerby Scott Joiner* Martha Sowerby Laura Krumm† Erin Johnson*† Mrs. Medlock Ben Weatherstaff Ao Li† Susan Sowerby Marina Harris*†

Production Team:

Conductor Sara Jobin Director Jose Maria Condemi Visual Designer Naomie Kremer* Costume Designer Kristi Johnson Lighting Designer **Christopher Maravich**

^{*} San Francisco Opera Debut † Current Adler Fellow

THE SECRET GARDEN

CALENDAR OF ANCILLARY EVENTS

Secret Garden Map

Late February through March

San Francisco Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way, San Francisco

This spring, pick up a special Secret Garden Map at entry kiosks to the San Francisco Botanical Garden and discover some of the secret gardens within. Find the Bamboo Forest, the Secret Stairs, the Hidden Dinosaur and more! Free with entry. For more information, please visit sfbotanicalgarden.org.

Secret Garden Artists Talk

Friday, March 1, 2013, 6 p.m.

Alumni House, UC Berkeley, Berkeley

Hear from the creative team behind *The Secret Garden* prior to the first performance. Participants include composer Nolan Gasser, director Jose Maria Condemi and visual designer Naomie Kremer. Kip Cranna, San Francisco Opera's Director of Music Administration, moderates.

Exploration Workshop: Inside the Secret Garden!

Saturday March 2, 2013; 3:30–4:30 p.m. and 5–6 p.m.

Saturday March 9, 2013; 3:30–4:30 p.m. and 5–6 p.m.

Toll Room, Alumni House, UC Berkeley, Berkeley

Presented by San Francisco Opera and Cal Performances' Education Departments prior to the March 2 and 9 performances, *Exploration Workshop: Inside the Secret Garden!* is an interactive, multigenerational workshop based on the themes, story, characters and music of *The Secret Garden*. Stage Manager Rachel Henneberry will lead dynamic and engaging activities that will transport participants into the world of this new opera. Snacks will be served after each workshop. Workshops are recommended for children ages 6 and older. Children should be accompanied by a parent or guardian. For more information, please visit sfopera.com/gardenworkshop.

Hidden Paths and Secret Spots in the UC Botanical Garden

Sunday, March 3, 2013, 1 p.m.

University of California Botanical Garden at Berkeley, 200 Centennial Drive, Berkeley CA

In conjunction with the world premiere of the opera *The Secret Garden*, the University of California Botanical Garden at Berkeley offers a family walk of the hidden paths and secret spots in their garden. For more information, please visit botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu.

Library Story Time

Sunday, March 3, 2013, 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, March 17, 2013, 10:30 a.m.

San Francisco Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way, San Francisco

Children and families are invited to come to the Helen Crocker Russell Library at the San Francisco Botanical Garden the first and third Sunday of March to enjoy the Library's free story time. Each month the Library selects a theme related to gardens, plants, or nature and collects its best books on the topic to be read by one of their talented story time readers. Join them in March when all of the books and stories will be about secret gardens and nature's hidden treasures.

Story time starts at 10:30 am, followed by a docent-led nature walk at 11:00 am that will explore the secret gardens that lie behind the walls of the San Francisco Botanical Garden. Admission into the garden is free for San Francisco residents with proof of residency. There is an admission fee required for non-residents to enter the garden and attend the docent walks following readings. Story time is recommended for ages 4–8, but everyone is welcome. For more information, please visit sfbotanicalgarden.org.

Explore The Secret Garden!

Tuesday, March 5, 2013, 6-7 p.m.

Koret Auditorium, San Francisco Public Library, 100 Grove Street, San Francisco

The San Francisco Public Library presents a special family-friendly event to explore and learn about the new opera based on the children's classic *The Secret Garden*. Composer Nolan Gasser and a principal singer from the cast will bring to life the opera's journey from page to stage. For more information, please visit sfpl.org.

Secret Garden Scavenger Hunt

Saturday, March 9, 2013, 1-4 p.m.

San Francisco Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way, San Francisco Families with children 5–12 can explore secret gardens while assembling materials for a secret art project. Visit favorite parts of San Francisco Botanical Garden and discover new ones as you make your way out to their Children's Garden to work with program staff. Pick up materials at the entry kiosks, free with entry. For more information, please visit sfbotanicalgarden.org.

Secret Gardens—Designing Small Spaces Workshop

March 23, 2013, 10 a.m-2 p.m.

San Francisco Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way, San Francisco You can transform the smallest patch of ground into your own secret garden. Garden Designer and Nursery Volunteer Dean Ouelette will help you make it happen. Bring in photos of your secret garden in waiting and learn how to make your dreams a reality. We'll also take a tour of the San Francisco Botanical Garden Nursery and discuss what plants work well in your environment. \$50 SFBG non-members, \$40 SFBG members. For more information, please visit sfbotanicalgarden.org.

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The Edmund and Jeannik Littlefield Foundation is proud to support this production.



2012-13 Season Sponsor

For further press information or to obtain *The Secret Garden*—related photographs, please visit sfopera.com/press or contact:

San Francisco Opera Communications:
Jon Finck (415) 565-6472 / <u>jfinck@sfopera.com</u>
Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / <u>jinouye@sfopera.com</u>
Robin Freeman (415) 565-6451 / <u>rfreeman@sfopera.com</u>

Cal Performances Communications:

Christina Kellogg (510) 643-6714 / ckellogg@calperformances.org
Joe Yang (510) 642-9121 / jvang@calperformances.org