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

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

SAN FRANCISCO (December 19, 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.

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 mezzo-soprano Laura Krumm as Martha Sowerby. Maestro Jobin will lead a chamber ensemble comprised of members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

"The Secret Garden has been an ideal operatic vehicle – a timeless tale of triumph over tragedy, and a paean to the value of friendship and the healing power of nature," commented composer Nolan Gasser. "It is especially inspiring to create an opera geared for the entire family, and to play a role in our vital need to grow the operatic audience."

Commissioned by San Francisco Opera, this new opera created for the entire family tells the tale of a pampered young girl born to privilege who finds herself alone in a bleak and unfamiliar land, until she discovers the hidden wonder of an abandoned secret garden. Starring as the obstinate young girl, Mary Lennox, is up-and-coming soprano Sarah Shafer. Shafer made her professional debut last season as Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Glyndebourne Festival and at the BBC Proms in London's Royal Albert Hall. She will appear this season as Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* with Opera Memphis and as Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera Company of Philadelphia.

Unexpected friendships blossom between Mary, her maid's brother Dickon Sowerby and her sickly cousin Colin Craven. Together they come to make the garden—and each other—flourish, leading both young and old toward a path of healing and understanding. Tenor Scott Joiner, who recently appeared as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Goro in *Madama Butterfly* and Tamino *Die Zauberflöte* with Asheville Lyric Opera, creates the role of Dickon and boy soprano Michael Kepler Meo appears as Colin. Meo has previously appeared as Miles in *Turn of the Screw* with Portland Opera, Houston Grand Opera and Los Angeles Opera; Charlie in *The Golden Ticket* with Opera Theater St. Louis; and Arthur in *Séance on a Wet Afternoon with* New York City Opera.

First-year Adler Fellow Philippe Sly makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Mary Lennox's distant and unhappy uncle Archibald Craven. Sly will make his Company main-stage debut as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* in June 2013 and recently appeared as Sitos in *Das Labyrinth* at the Salzburg Festival and in *The Tales of Hoffmann, A Florentine Tragedy*, *Gianni Schicchi,* and *Semele* as a

member of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio. Second-year Adler Fellow Laura Krumm creates the role of housemaid Martha Sowerby, Dickon's mother. Krumm made her San Francisco Opera debut as Countess Ceprano in this fall's *Rigoletto;* other recent repertoire includes Charlotte in *Werther,* Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito* and Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

Composer, pianist and musicologist Nolan Gasser makes his San Francisco Opera debut with *The Secret Garden*. Other upcoming projects include *Benny and Joon*, in partnership with MGM On Stage and a forthcoming book on musical taste and the interrelation of music and science. Recent compositions include *Sonoma Overture*, an orchestral work commissioned by the Santa Rosa Symphony for the grand opening of Weill Hall at the Green Music Center at Sonoma State University; a new musical, *Cosmic Reflection: A Narrated Symphony*, which received its premiere at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.; *World Concerto for Cello and Orchestra,* which received its premiere in Oakland and San Francisco; *American Festivals,* a four-movement symphonic oratorio, which was performed at the Festival del Sole in Napa Valley; and *GLAST Prelude*, recorded by the American Brass Quintet. In addition to his work in music and literature, Nolan Gasser is the architect of Music Genome Project—the technology behind Pandora Radio.

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. His diverse output includes dramas for radio and television, including *Hitler in Therapy,* the WorldPlay Award-winner in 2005 for the best play from an English-language broadcaster; and teleplays for *Masterpiece Theatre* including the miniseries *Freud.* Artistic director of the Woodstock Players, his other recent works staged by that company include *Magus and Midget in a Catsuit Reciting Spinoza,* and his new play*, Hedgerow Specimen.*

Conductor Sara Jobin, who has previously led performances of *Tosca, Der fliegende Holländer, Norma,* the world premiere production of Philip Glass's *Appomattox,* and Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince* at San Francisco Opera, returns to conduct members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. Jose Maria Condemi, artistic director of Opera Santa Barbara who has directed *Così fan tutte*, *Tosca, Faust, Madama Butterfly,* and *Carmen* at San Francisco Opera, directs this new production.

This new production is designed by painter and multi-media artist Naomie Kremer and features costumes designed by Kristi Johnson. Kremer's work for the stage includes an all video set for Berkeley Opera's production of Béla Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* and a video-based set for *Light Moves,* a collaboration with the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. Her large-scale, intensely colored abstract paintings are in many public and private collections including the Fine Arts Museums of SF, the Magnes Museum, the Berkeley Art Museum and the US Embassy in Beijing. Her projections and set designs for *The Secret Garden* incorporate reproductions of a number of 18th Century paintings from the Fine Arts Museums of SF's permanent collection, including works by Sir Henry Raeburn, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough and William Merritt Chase.

Exploration Workshop: Inside the Secret Garden!

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, multi-generational 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. The workshops take place at 3:30–4:30 p.m. and 5–6 p.m. on Saturday March 2 and Saturday March 9 at the Toll Room, Alumni House on campus at UC Berkeley. 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.

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 the War Memorial Opera House are priced from $30 to $80 for adults and $15 to $40 for children up to 18 years old. Tickets for the 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) 864-3330]. 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

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

WORLD PREMIERE
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***
Archibald Craven	**Philippe Sly*†**
Dickon Sowerby	**Scott Joiner***
Martha Sowerby	**Laura Krumm†**
Mrs. Medlock	**Erin Johnson*†**
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

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

A native of State College, PA, soprano **SARAH SHAFER** (Mary Lennox) holds the Alfred Greenberg Memorial Fellowship in Opera at the Curtis Institute of Music. Shafer recently made her professional operatic debut in the role of Barbarina and covered the role of Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Glyndebourne Festival and at the BBC Proms in London's Royal Albert Hall. This season she will make her American debut with Opera Memphis as Adina (*L'Elisir d'Amore*) and with Opera Company of Philadelphia as Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte)*. Shafer's credits with Curtis Opera Theatre include Giulietta (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi)*, Elizabeth Zimmer (*Elegy for Young Lovers)*, Ilia (*Idomeneo)*, Rosina (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia)*, Sofia (*Il Signor Bruschino)*, and Mélisande (*Impressions of Pelléas)*. This season at Curtis, she will sing the roles of Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte)* and Almirena (*Rinaldo)*. On the concert stage, the soprano was recently heard as Sophie in Strauss' Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier* with the Quad City Symphony Orchestra. Other recently performed works include Mozart's Mass in C Minor and Requiem, Handel's *Messiah* and *Dixit Dominus*, Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*, and Mahler's Fourth Symphony. Shafer has spent two summers as a resident artist at the Marlboro Music Festival, where she worked with legendary pianist Richard Goode; she appeared in a solo recital with Goode this December in Philadelphia.

Since his professional debut in 2009, at age 10, **MICHAEL KEPLER MEO** (Colin Craven) has performed as a principal singer with Portland Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, New York City Opera and with the opera companies of St. Louis and Wexford (Ireland). His roles include Miles (*Turn of the Screw),* Charlie (*The Golden Ticket),* Arthur (*Séance on a Wet Afternoon),* Yniold (*Pelléas et Mélisande),* Oberto (*Alcina),* and the title role in *Amahl and the Night Visitors.* Kepler Meo has also appeared as a soloist with the Portland Baroque Orchestra, Oregon Bach Festival, Portland Chamber Orchestra, and the Corvallis Symphony. He is an alumnus of Portland Boychoir and Ethos Music Center. Kepler Meo recently created the title role of Northwest Children's Theater's world premiere production of *El Zorrito,* a performance that earned him the Portland Area Musical Theater Award for Outstanding Young Performer. He returned to that company this December in the title role of *Peter Pan*.

A winner in the 2011 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, bass-baritone **PHILLIPE SLY** (Archibald Craven) is a first-year Adler Fellow and makes his San Francisco Opera main-stage debut in 2013 as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*. A native of Ottawa, Ontario and a graduate of the 2011 Merola Opera Program, he is a member of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio. Recent and upcoming engagements include Sitos (*Das Labyrinth)* at the Salzburg Festival, Marcello (*La Bohème*) and Nick Shadow (*The Rake's Progress*) at McGill University and Masetto (*Don Giovanni*) at the University of Ottawa. Sly appeared with the Canadian Opera Company in the 2011–12 season singing roles in *The Tales of Hoffmann, A Florentine Tragedy*, *Gianni Schicchi,* and *Semele*. A recording artist with Analekta, Sly's first solo album, *In Dreams,* was released in 2012.

Since his introduction to opera as a youth, tenor **SCOTT JOINER** (Dickon Sowerby) has performed with Opera Colorado, Central City Opera, Knoxville Opera, Asheville Lyric Opera, the Opera Company of Brooklyn, American Opera Projects, the Intermezzo Opera Festival and Teatro Magnani di Fidenza in addition to performances with the Escher String Quartet, Bryan Symphony Orchestra and the

Asheville Symphony Orchestra. As a principal artist with Asheville Lyric Opera, Joiner has sung nine roles over four seasons, including Ferrando (*Così fan tutte)*, Nemorino (*L'Elisir d'Amore)*, Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte)*and Goro (*Madama Butterfly*). This season he appeared as the tenor soloist in the Mozart Requiem and Handel's Messiah with the Asheville Symphony Orchestra and will also appear in concert with the Hendersonville Symphony and Colorado Music Festival.

A native of Iowa City, Iowa, mezzo-soprano **LAURA KRUMM** (Martha Sowerby) is a second-year Adler Fellow who made her San Francisco Opera debut as Countess Ceprano in this fall's *Rigoletto*. Her recent repertoire includes Charlotte (*Werther),* Sesto (*La Clemenza di Tito*)*,* Cherubino (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Prince Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*), and the Second Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*). A graduate of the 2011 Merola Opera Program, she has performed in concerts and operas with La Musica Lirica in Novafeltria, Italy and OperaWorks in Los Angeles, and she was a finalist in the 2011 Dallas Opera Guild Competition.

Mezzo-soprano **ERIN JOHNSON** (Mrs. Medlock) is a first-year Adler Fellow and was a participant in the 2012 Merola Opera Program, where she performed as Giovanna Seymour (*Anna Bolena*) and Mab (*La Jolie Fille de Perth*). A native of Washington, New Jersey, she holds a master's degree from Rice University. While at Rice, Johnson was also awarded to study in Florence through the Margaret Pack Italian Language Study Program in 2012. In 2009, Johnson was accepted into the Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Program, where she was seen in scenes from *Roméo et Juliette, Les Dialogues des Carmélites,* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. She also holds bachelor's degrees from Cairn University.

A native of Dezhou, China, **AO LI** (Ben) made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2011 as Ascanio Petrucci (*Lucrezia Borgia*) and returned as Le Dancaïre (*Carmen for Families*). The baritone is a third-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 Youth of China award and the bronze award in the People's Republic of China Ministry of Culture's Eighth National Vocal Competition. He appears in the Company's 2012 productions of *Tosca* and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi.*

Soprano **MARINA HARRIS** (Susan), a second-year Adler Fellow and a Harris is an alumna of the 2011 Merola Opera Program, where she performed the role of Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. The Los Angeles native is a three time soloist with the Los Angeles Bach Festival. In 2010, Harris was chosen as a Western regional finalist for the Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions and was the second place winner in the finals. She was also a Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions regional finalist in 2009 and took home the Special Encouragement Award. She was selected as an Encouragement Award Winner at the Marilyn Horne Foundation Vocal Competition in 2010 for her performance of art song repertoire.

NOLAN GASSER (Composer) is a critically acclaimed composer, pianist, and musicologist, as well as the architect of Music Genome Project—the technology behind Pandora Radio. His original works have been performed at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Alice Tully Hall, La Salle Pleyel (Paris), and the Rose Bowl (Pasadena), among many others. In addition to composing *The Secret Garden*, upcoming projects include a new musical, *Benny and Joon*, in partnership with MGM On Stage and a

forthcoming book on musical taste and the interrelation of music and science. Recent compositions include *Sonoma Overture*, an orchestral work commissioned by the Santa Rosa Symphony for the grand opening of Weill Hall at the Green Music Center at Sonoma State University; *Cosmic Reflection: A Narrated Symphony*, the second commission associated with NASA's Fermi mission (depicting the entire history of the Universe), received its premiere at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.; *World Concerto for Cello and Orchestra,* which received its premiere in Oakland and San Francisco; *American Festivals,* a four-movement symphonic oratorio, was performed at the Festival del Sole in Napa Valley; and *GLAST Prelude*, written for the 2008 launch of NASA's Fermi Space Telescope and recorded by the American Brass Quintet. *Cosmic Reflection* was recently recorded by the Baltimore Symphony under Marin Alsop; the music is accompanied by a high-resolution video for release in theaters and planetariums. Outside of composition, Gasser is the artistic director of Classical Archives, the largest classical music website on the Internet. He received his Ph.D. in musicology from Stanford University, where he has been an adjunct professor in Medieval and Renaissance music history. As a pianist, Gasser performs and records as a soloist and with the San Francisco Jazz Quartet.

CAREY HARRISON (Librettist) 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. He has received numerous grants from the U.K. Arts Council, and his prizes include Sony Radio Academy Awards, the Giles Cooper Award, the Prix Marulic, the U.K. Writers' Guild Award for Best Play, the Prix Italia Silver Award, and the Best Play Award from the Berlin Akademie der Kuenste, as well as two nominations for the Pushcart Prize for Journalism. His drama output for radio and television includes *Hitler in Therapy,* the WorldPlay Award-winner in 2005 for the best play from an English-language broadcaster; *Hitler in Therapy* was Harrison's 100th drama to be recorded in a U.K. studio. Seventeen hours of Harrison's teleplays have been seen on *Masterpiece Theatre*, including the miniseries *Freud*. Recent work includes *A Cook's Tour of Communism* (2008) broadcast by the BBC World Service; *Breakfast with Stalin* (2010), which received its premiere in Cologne; and *Scenes from a Misunderstanding* at the Jewish Festival in Manhattan and in Woodstock, New York. Artistic director of the Woodstock Players, his other recent works staged by that company include *Magus* and *Midget in a Catsuit Reciting Spinoza*, and his new play, *Hedgerow Specimen,* will be seen there in 2012. Harrison is professor of English at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York and has been a book reviewer for numerous newspapers and journals, including the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The New York Sunday Times,* and the *London Review of Books*.

Grammy-nominated conductor **SARA JOBIN** (Conductor)has led several San Francisco Opera mainstage productions, including *Tosca, Der Fliegende Holländer, Norma,* the world premiere production of Philip Glass's *Appomattox,* and Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*. As music director of the Center for Contemporary Opera, she premiered Michael Dellaira's *The Secret Agent* in New York, and within a year reprised it in New York, at the Armel Opera Festival in Hungary and in Avignon, France. Credits elsewhere include *Our Town, The Ballad of Baby Doe*, and upcoming productions *of Susannah, The Tender Land,* and *Dead Man Walking* with Opera Idaho as the music director of their Made in America Series; the premiere of Philip Glass's *The Bacchae* for the New York Shakespeare Festival; John Musto's *Volpone* with Wolf Trap Opera; *Carmen* and a suite from Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Grapes of Wrath* with Anchorage Opera; *Faust, Carmen, La Bohème, Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Tacoma Opera; performances of *Der Fliegende Holländer* with Arizona Opera;

and a fire opera version of *The Seven Deadly Sins* at the Crucible in Oakland. Recent orchestral debuts have included Symphony Silicon Valley, the Dayton Philharmonic, the Bochumer Symphoniker in Germany, and The Little Orchestra Society in New York. Jobin appeared with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players at the MANCA Festival in Nice, France and in San Francisco, and premiered a suite from Stewart Wallace's *The Bonesetter's Daughter* with Musiqa Houston. Her repertoire project, Different Voice Opera Project, founded in 2008 with Carol Gilligan, presented a workshop of its first work, *Pearl* by Amy Scurria, this summer. On disc Jobin can be heard leading the comic American opera *Volpone* by John Musto, which was nominated for a Grammy in 2010; on the Koch label she recorded a premiere by Chris Brubeck on his CD *Convergence*, sung by Frederica von Stade.

Artistic director of Opera Santa Barbara, **JOSE MARIA CONDEMI** (Director) has directed *Così fan tutte*, *Tosca, The Elixir of Love for Families, Faust, Madama Butterfly,* and *Carmen* at San Francisco Opera as well as *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi, La Bohème,* and *La Cenerentola* for the Merola Opera Program. A former Adler Fellow and Merola Opera Program alumnus, his notable engagements include a new production of *Ernani* and *Tristan und Isolde* for Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Luisa Miller* for the Canadian Opera Company; *La Bohème, Il Trovatore* and *Orphée et Eurydice* for Seattle Opera; *Ainadamar*, *Don Giovanni,* and *La Traviata* for Cincinnati Opera; *Maria Padilla* for Minnesota Opera; *Il Trovatore* for Austin Lyric Opera; *Così fan tutte* for Atlanta Opera; and *Die Zauberflöte, L'Elisir d'Amore, Don Pasquale,* and *La Rondine* with Opera San José. Condemi's collaboration with contemporary opera composers includes directing the world premieres of Armienta's *River of Women* and *The Weeping Woman*. Upcoming engagements include *Florencia en el Amazonas* for Utah Opera, *Maria de Buenos Aires* for Florida Grand Opera, the world premiere of the San Francisco Opera commission *The Secret Garden*, a directing debut at Opera Theater of Saint Louis, and return engagements with Houston Grand Opera, and Seattle Opera.

A painter and multi-media artist, **NAOMIE KREMER** (Visual Designer) has created text animations, painting animations and video for stage performance. Kremer's large-scale, intensely colored abstract paintings incorporate text, architectural elements, nature, and figures inscribed beneath the bold brush strokes and bright, startling colors. Her work for the stage includes an all video set for the Berkeley Opera's production of Béla Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, performed in May 2008; and a video-based set for *Light Moves,* a collaboration with the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company which premiered at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in November, 2011, touring in the US in 2012. Her paintings are in many public and private collections including the Fine Arts Museums of SF, the Magnes Museum, the Berkeley Art Museum and the US Embassy in Beijing. In 2008 she began making hybrid paintings: oil on canvas paintings with video projected on their surface, marrying the physical world of canvas and paint with the digital world of video. She's had recent solo exhibitions in San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Paris and Dusseldorf. Her painting animations, oil on canvas paintings which she digitally deconstructs and animates, have been featured on the Apple Pro website for their groundbreaking use of the animation program Motion. Born in Tel Aviv, Israel and raised in Brooklyn, NY, Kremer has lived in the Bay Area since 1977. She received her MFA in Painting and Drawing from California College of the Arts in 1993. She is represented in San Francisco by Modernism Gallery.

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Jon Finck (415) 565-6472 / jfinck@sfopera.com
Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / jinouye@sfopera.com
Robin Freeman (415) 565-6451 / rfreeman@sfopera.com