



**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CELEBRATES OPENING OF 96TH SEASON WITH
FREE *OPERA IN THE PARK* CONCERT
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 AT GOLDEN GATE PARK**

**Vocal Soloists and Conductors from the Company's Fall Season
Featured with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra**



Scenes from *San Francisco Chronicle Presents Opera in the Park* in 2017. ©Stefan Cohen/San Francisco Opera

SAN FRANCISCO (August 31, 2018)—San Francisco Opera celebrates the opening of its 96th Season with the annual *San Francisco Chronicle Presents Opera in the Park* on Sunday, September 9 at 1:30 p.m. The free concert in Golden Gate Park features vocal artists and conductors from the Company's fall season performing with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in a program of arias, duets, popular songs and orchestral favorites. San Francisco Opera General Director **Matthew Shilvock** serves as master of ceremonies for the afternoon.

A truly international roster of artists will appear at this year's concert including soprano **Lianna Haroutounian**, mezzo-soprano **Ekaterina Semenchuk**, tenor **Marco Berti**, baritone **Dimitri Platanias** and conductor **Daniele Callegari** from the double bill of Mascanagi's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (September 7–30); conductor **Riccardo Frizza** who leads Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux* (September 8–27); and, from the upcoming new production of Puccini's *Tosca* (October 3–30), introducing soprano **Carmen Giannattasio** in her first appearance with San Francisco Opera, tenor **Brian Jagde** and conductor **Leo Hussain**. Other participating artists include sopranos **Sarah Cambidge** and **Toni Marie Palmertree**, mezzo-soprano **Ashley Dixon**, tenor **Pene Pati**, and bass-baritone **Christian Pursell**.

The 2018 *Opera in the Park* concert will be dedicated to the memory of David Wiegand, former San Francisco Chronicle Assistant Managing Editor, Arts and Entertainment. A devoted champion for the arts in San Francisco, Wiegand passed unexpectedly in late April 2018.

Now in its 45th year, *Opera in the Park* is held on Robin Williams Meadow, formerly known as Sharon Meadow and renamed in 2018 for the Bay Area comedian and film star. Established by former San Francisco Opera General Director Kurt Herbert Adler in 1971, the free concert celebrating the opening of the San Francisco Opera season draws 15,000 music lovers annually. Opera legends from Luciano Pavarotti and Plácido Domingo to Marilyn Horne and Anna Netrebko have performed at *Opera in the Park*.

Food and beverages are available at the park for sale, but many audience members bring picnics to enjoy on the lawn at this family-friendly event. In the traditional *Opera in the Park* finale, the audience joins the singers for a rendition of the brindisi (drinking song) from Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata*.

This event is free; no tickets are required. An accessible seating section and restrooms are provided. A pedestrian ADA drop-off area is located on Bowling Green Drive and limited accessible parking is available. Public parking will be extremely limited and alternative transportation such as Muni (5, 7, 21, 33, N) and Uber/Lyft ridesharing apps, are strongly recommended. A free bicycle valet parking area on the east side of the meadow has been organized in partnership with the Bicycle Coalition. Artists and program are subject to change. For further information about *San Francisco Chronicle Presents Opera in the Park*, call (415) 864-3330 or visit sfopera.com/park.

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San Francisco Chronicle Presents OPERA IN THE PARK

FREE CONCERT celebrating the opening of San Francisco Opera's 96th Season

Sunday, September 9, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.

Robin Williams Meadow in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park

Program features works by Bellini, Boito, Cilea, Donizetti, Gounod, Handel, Leoncavallo, Mascagni, Ponchielli, Strauss and Verdi performed by the stars of San Francisco Opera's Fall Season, including:

Sopranos: Sarah Cambidge, Carmen Giannattasio, Lianna Haroutounian, Toni Marie Palmertree

Mezzo-sopranos: Ashley Dixon, Ekaterina Semenchuk

Tenors: Marco Berti, Brian Jagde, Pene Pati

Baritone: Dimitri Platanias

Bass-baritone: Christian Pursell

Conductors: Daniele Callegari, Riccardo Frizza and Leo Hussain

San Francisco Opera Orchestra (Kay Stern, Concertmaster)

Master of Ceremonies: Matthew Shilvock, San Francisco Opera General Director

This event is FREE; no tickets required. Bring a picnic and enjoy this outdoor, family-friendly concert; food and beverages will also be available for sale at the event. Limited ADA parking and seating is available. Public parking is extremely limited; taking public transit is highly recommended. A free bicycle valet parking area will be available on the east side of the meadow.

For further information about *Opera in the Park*, call (415) 864-3330 or visit sfopera.com/park.

San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by The Dolby Family, Bertie Bialek Elliott, Keith and Priscilla Geeslin, Ann and Gordon Getty, John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn, Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson, Franklin and Catherine Johnson, Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, Steven M. Menzies, Bernard and Barbro Osher, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem, Dianne and Tad Taube, Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment Funds, Diane B. Wilsey and Barbara A. Wolfe.

San Francisco Opera is supported, in part by a grant from Grants for the Arts.

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Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera. Pianos provided by Piedmont Piano Company.

San Francisco Chronicle Presents Opera in the Park is made possible, in part, by Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey. Additional support provided by William and Gretchen Kimball Fund. Media sponsors are *San Francisco Chronicle* and Classical KDFC. San Francisco Opera also extends special thanks to San Francisco Recreation & Parks, the San Francisco Parks Alliance and San Francisco Bicycle Coalition.

Opera in the Park Corporate Sponsor is Kaiser Permanente.



2018–19 Season Sponsor

High resolution downloadable photographs of *Opera in the Park*, 2018–19 Season productions and artists are available at sfopera.com/press.

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