



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

NEW NORTH STAGE DOOR PODCAST EPISODE RELEASED TODAY

Segments Explore Opera Prompting, the Company's History of Touring,
Being a Supernumerary and First Opera Experiences

Guests Include Mezzo-Soprano Dolora Zajick, Conductor Robert Mollicone

Available now at sfopera.com/northstagedoor



San Francisco Opera prompter, 1947; Dolora Zajick as Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, 1986 (Photo: Robert Cahen);
The super bear in *Siegfried*, 2018 (Photo: Cory Weaver)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (January 11, 2022) — San Francisco Opera today released the latest episode of the Company's behind-the-scenes podcast, *North Stage Door*. Episode 4 features stories about individuals who make opera and the ways in which the artform enchants audiences. Guests include conductor Robert Mollicone and celebrated mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick, and the episode features musical selections from San Francisco Opera productions including *Manon*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Götterdämmerung*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Fille du Régiment* and *Elektra*.

San Francisco Opera Assistant Technical Director and *North Stage Door* host Chris Largent leads listeners through the episode's four segments:

Prompters: Ever wonder what was going on behind that wooden hood at the edge of the stage? That little box is the domain of the prompter, a musician who does much more than help performers remember their lines. Conductor and pianist Robert Mollicone demystifies the art of opera prompting and describes the responsibilities that go with sitting in the best seat in the house.

Opera on the Road: San Francisco Opera has a distinguished history of touring outside of the Bay Area, moving personnel and productions from city to city by plane, train, bus and even dogsled. Mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick, a tour veteran from her days as a young artist with the San Francisco Opera Center, adds her perspective to this chronicle about taking the show on the road.

Supernumeraries: The dictionary defines the word 'supernumerary' as a person or thing in excess of the normal or requisite number. In opera, though, supernumeraries are entirely necessary. Former San Francisco Opera Rehearsal and Facilities Manager Trey Costerisan relates how the Company casts supers and how he found stilt-walking jugglers when a production required two of them. Testimony on the lure of the stage is offered by San Francisco Opera supers Helen Lew and Karsten Guthridge.

My First Opera: What was your first opera? That is the question that San Francisco Opera Music Librarian Michael Bragg asks his *North Stage Door* and Company colleagues. Whether it was *La Bohème*, *Das Rheingold* or *The Rake's Progress*, their responses reveal how first encounters with opera have inspired awe, curiosity, love and careers in the field.

North Stage Door was launched in April 2021 as part of San Francisco Opera's new digital initiatives, which also include the *In Song* video portrait series and *Atrium Sessions*. The inaugural podcast episode offers a look inside *The Barber of Seville* and interviews with baritone Lucas Meachem, soprano Patricia Racette, Academy Award-winning director and Pixar Chief Creative Officer Pete Docter, Chairman of the Chuck Jones Center for Creativity Craig Kausen and members of *The Barber of Seville* creative and production teams. The second episode explores the Company's Mozart-Da Ponte Trilogy with guests including director Michael Cavanagh, soprano Nicole Heaston, bass-baritone Michael Sumuel and Lemony Snicket author Daniel Handler. Episode 3, released in anticipation of the Company's new production of Beethoven's *Fidelio* last October, includes

conversations with director Matthew Ozawa, former US Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, Chorus Director Ian Robertson and participants in the Prison Arts Project at San Quentin Prison.

All *North Stage Door* episodes are free and can be accessed at sfopera.com/online, Apple Podcasts, Spotify and other podcast hubs.

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North Stage Door is a production of San Francisco Opera

Hosted by Chris Largent

Production Team for *North Stage Door*: Katherine Baltrush, Michael Bragg, Chris Davis, Rachel Garoon, Jeffery McMillan, Jeremy Patfield, Barbara Rominski, Celine Strouts

Sound Designer and Audio Engineer: Tod Nixon

Coordinating Producers: Jodi Gage and Celine Strouts

Consulting Producer: Elena Park/Lumahai Productions

Executive Producers: Molly McBride and San Francisco Opera Managing Director: Production Jennifer Good

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Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera.

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PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable photographs for *North Stage Door* are available at pressphotos.sfopera.com.

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