



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

LIVE OPERA RETURNS TO THE BAY AREA

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S PRESENTATION OF
THE BARBER OF SEVILLE AT MARIN CENTER DRIVE-IN OPENS APRIL 23

New 90-Minute Adaptation by Director Matthew Ozawa Stars
Lucas Meachem, Daniela Mack, Laura Krumm, Alek Shrader

Conductor Roderick Cox Leads San Francisco Opera Orchestra

Eleven Shows April 23–May 15 Mark First Live Performances
Since Onset of Global Pandemic



San Francisco Opera's new production of *The Barber of Seville* in rehearsals at Marin Center drive-in
Photos: Stefan Cohen (left and center); San Francisco Opera (right)

NEW PODCAST, *NORTH STAGE DOOR*, LAUNCHES APRIL 22
Inaugural Episode Goes Inside *The Barber of Seville*

San Francisco, CA (April 19, 2021) — San Francisco Opera stages its first live opera performances with a new, specially adapted production of Gioachino Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* offered in a drive-in setting on the bucolic grounds of San Rafael's Marin Center. Opening on April 23, the eleven performances running through May 15 are the Company's first live performances in 16

months since the onset of the global pandemic, which caused the cancellation of the Company's Summer and Fall 2020 seasons.

San Francisco Opera returns to live opera performance with a new adaptation of one of the greatest operas in the repertoire, Rossini's *The Barber of Seville (Il Barbiere di Siviglia)*. Director Matthew Ozawa has adapted the opera into a 90-minute (no intermission) backstage comedy that retains all of the work's humor and vocal fireworks. Ozawa's concept finds singers returning to the opera house after a pandemic and bringing opera back to life, mingling the antics of backstage life with the wit of this beloved work in a poignant and riotously funny staging. The opera will be performed in an English translation by Marcie Stapp.

Audiences for these rain-or-shine drive-in performances have a choice of purchasing tickets for one of two neighboring locations on the Marin Center campus. The Fairgrounds has a view of the set and live performers, while the Lagoon area allows ticket holders to experience the performance live via simulcast to a drive-in movie screen. A limited number of spots in the Lagoon simulcast area are available for free by arrangement with San Francisco Opera to organizations employing essential workers, as well as to community organizations in Marin.



San Francisco Opera stage at the Fairgrounds, Marin Center;
Conductor Roderick Cox in early rehearsals of *The Barber of Seville*
Photos: Stefan Cohen (left and center); San Francisco Opera (right)

Conductor Roderick Cox makes his Company debut leading an 18-piece San Francisco Opera Orchestra ensemble, including five wind and brass players. As part of the rigorous safety protocols, the orchestra is performing in an 80' by 40' orchestra tent behind the stage (part of an outdoor backstage compound erected to support all aspects of the production). Musicians and singers are utilizing specially designed wind masks and singer's masks (singer's masks used only for rehearsals in the socially distanced staging) developed by Dr. Sanziana Roman of UCSF and the San Francisco Opera Costume Shop.

The opera, which will be presented without chorus given health protocols and shorn of a few characters, is anchored by a stellar cast. Baritone Lucas Meachem, a “robust and smooth-toned Figaro” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), is the charismatic barber whose tongue-twisting music includes the famous aria “Largo al factotum.” Mezzo-soprano Daniela Mack portrays Rosina, for which the *Guardian* praised her “dark tone and formidable coloratura,” with Laura Krumm singing the final three performances. Alek Shrader, whom the *New York Times* hailed as a “virile Almaviva with matinee-idol good looks,” reprises the role of the Count which he performed opposite his wife, Mack, at the War Memorial Opera House in 2013.

Rosina’s guardian, Dr. Bartolo, will be performed by bass-baritone Philip Skinner, and bass Kenneth Kellogg is the music teacher, Don Basilio. Mezzo-soprano Catherine Cook reprises her portrayal of Berta, a part she has sung in five previous productions with the Company.



Construction of SF Opera stage at the Fairgrounds, Marin Center; Tech rehearsal showing projection; Simulcast screen at the Lagoon, Marin Center

Photos: Tony Taubert (left); San Francisco Opera (center, right)

The opera’s fast-moving action and melodic flights take place on an adapted version of the unit set originally intended for San Francisco Opera’s new production of Beethoven’s *Fidelio*, which was postponed due to the pandemic. Work on the set continued in the Company’s scene shop during the shutdown and the *Barber* creative team utilized the structure’s innate flexibility of design for the Marin Center drive-in experience.

The full-scale production takes place on a 120’-wide festival stage erected on site for these performances. Conceived by Bay Area designer Alexander V. Nichols, the set and projection designs will take on the appearance of the War Memorial Opera House, especially the backstage dressing rooms. The production features new costumes designed by Jessica Jahn and lighting for the open-air production by JAX Messenger. Four sliding video screens are an integral part of the production and create different playing areas on the set. Two additional

large video screens on either side of the stage serve as image magnification screens for close-up views. The sound is mixed into a FM signal broadcast to each car.



Safety signage and backstage compound of SF Opera drive-in at Marin Center
Photos: San Francisco Opera

The resumption of live performance this spring is made possible by San Francisco Opera's partnership with a team of University of California San Francisco (UCSF) doctors led by Dr. George Rutherford and other leading health professionals. Through weekly consultations that began last summer, comprehensive safety protocols have been developed in accordance with state, local and industry guidelines regarding testing, social distancing, the development of a patent-pending singer's mask, and other controls to ensure a safe return to live performance for artists, audiences and staff.

The performances of *The Barber of Seville* and concerts featuring the San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows, *The Adlers: Live at the Drive-In*, are taking place at the Marin Center thanks to the partnership of the County of Marin; Public Health Officer of Marin Dr. Matt Willis; and Director of Cultural Services in Marin Gabriella Calicchio. Located just north of the Golden Gate Bridge and surrounded by the beautiful Frank Lloyd Wright architecture of the Marin County Civic Center, the venue is a welcoming environment to present live opera with safety protocols that meet the County's strict guidelines.

NORTH STAGE DOOR PODCAST PREMIERES APRIL 22
Inaugural episode takes listeners inside *The Barber of Seville*

San Francisco Opera's new podcast, *North Stage Door*, launches with a fascinating excursion into *The Barber of Seville* and the Company's new production of Rossini's enduring masterpiece at the Marin Center drive-in, along with other short features. The 50-minute inaugural episode includes contributions by special guests Lucas Meachem, soprano Patricia Racette, Pixar Chief

Creative Officer Pete Docter and Craig Kausen, Chairman of the Chuck Jones Center for Creativity, offering a window into the vibrant creativity and rich history of San Francisco Opera as it forges a path forward during the pandemic. *North Stage Door* will be available at sfopera.com/northstagedoor and platforms like Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

THE ADLERS: LIVE AT THE DRIVE-IN
April 29, May 6, May 13 at Marin Center

San Francisco Opera's return to live performance at the Marin Center includes three opportunities to hear San Francisco Opera's eleven resident artists live in an open-air concert. The brilliantly talented Adler Fellows will command the spotlight in a 70-minute program of operatic favorites by composers such as Mozart, Rossini, Puccini, Verdi and Lehár. The 2021 Adler Fellows include sopranos Anne-Marie MacIntosh, Elisa Sunshine and Esther Tonea; mezzo-soprano Simone McIntosh; tenors Zhengyi Bai, Christopher Colmenero and Christopher Oglesby; baritone Timothy Murray; bass Stefan Egerstrom and pianists Kseniia Polstiankina Barrad and Andrew King. Jose Maria Condemi is the stage director of the concerts.

Tickets are available for the Fairgrounds lot, with a view of the set and live performers, and the adjacent Lagoon lot, where ticket holders can experience the performance live via simulcast. San Francisco Opera offers a limited number of free spots for the Lagoon simulcast area to organizations employing essential workers such as healthcare workers, teachers and grocery workers, as well as to community organizations in Marin. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit sfopera.com/onstage. Representatives from organizations interested in securing free tickets can contact: groupsales@sfopera.com.

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THE BARBER OF SEVILLE
LIVE AT THE MARIN CENTER DRIVE-IN
*Rain or Shine

Live opera returns to the Bay Area for the first time since the onset of the global pandemic with a new 90-minute adaption of Gioachino Rossini's *The Barber Seville*. The full-scale production is staged by director Matthew Ozawa for drive-in audiences at San Rafael's Marin Center. Featuring

San Francisco Opera Orchestra musicians conducted by Roderick Cox and a cast of leading Rossinians, the production marks the Company's return to live music making with all of the energy and élan of Rossini's timeless comedy.

April 23, 24, 27, 30; May 1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 14, 15, 2021 at 8 pm

Marin Center, 10 Avenue of the Flags, San Rafael, CA 94903

Cast:

<i>Figaro</i>	Lucas Meachem
<i>Rosina</i>	Daniela Mack / Laura Krumm (May 11, 14, 15)
<i>Count Almaviva</i>	Alek Shrader
<i>Doctor Bartolo</i>	Philip Skinner
<i>Don Basilio</i>	Kenneth Kellogg
<i>Berta</i>	Catherine Cook

Creative Team:

<i>Conductor</i>	Roderick Cox
<i>Production</i>	Matthew Ozawa
<i>Set and Projection Designer</i>	Alexander V. Nichols
<i>Costume Designer</i>	Jessica Jahn
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	JAX Messenger

San Francisco Opera Orchestra

Tickets are available at sfopera.com or call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330
\$250 per car (Fairgrounds: main lot with view of live performance)
\$50 per car (Lagoon: view of live performance simulcast to a drive-in movie screen)
Digital at-home stream of the production will be available for purchase in late spring 2021
Tickets must be purchased ahead of time; no tickets will be sold onsite.

A limited number of free spots in the Lagoon simulcast area are offered to organizations employing essential workers such as healthcare workers, teachers and grocery workers, as well as to community organizations in Marin. Representatives from organizations interested in securing free tickets can contact: groupsales@sfopera.com.

Vehicles will be admitted to the drive-in area on a first-come, first-serve basis. Motorcycles and convertibles are not allowed at the Marin drive-in. Audience members experience the production from their vehicles and the music will be transmitted through FM radio.

For FAQs and more information about the performances and venue, visit sfopera.com/marincenter.

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San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by The Dolby Family, Carol and Dixon Doll, Bertie Bialek Elliott, Keith and Priscilla Geeslin, 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.

This production of *The Barber of Seville* is made possible, in part by, John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn, and Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem. Additional support provided by Jerome Guillen and Jeremy Gallaher, members of the Producers Circle and generous gifts to the Creative Edge Fund, founded by Carol and Dixon Doll.

North Stage Door is made possible by an OPERA America Innovation Grant, supported by the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation.

OFFICIAL WINE SPONSOR



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



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PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable photographs of San Francisco Opera's *The Barber of Seville* at the Marin Center Drive-In are available at sfopera.com/press

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