



SAN FRANCISCO  
OPERA

**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA PRESENTS GAETANO DONIZETTI'S *ROBERTO DEVEREUX*  
WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE, SEPTEMBER 8–27**

**Director Stephen Lawless Sets Bel Canto Drama of Tudor-Era England in  
Recreation of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre**

**Riccardo Frizza Conducts Stellar Cast Led by Sondra Radvanovsky,  
Jamie Barton, Russell Thomas and Andrew Manea**



Scenes from Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux* starring Sondra Radvanovsky as Elisabetta [left]; Russell Thomas in the title role and Jamie Barton as Sara [center]; Radvanovsky and Andrew Manea as Nottingham. ©Cory Weaver/San Francisco Opera

**Tickets available at [sfopera.com](http://sfopera.com) and (415) 864-3330**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (September 8, 2018) — San Francisco Opera's 96th season continues Saturday, September 8 with Gaetano Donizetti's lyric drama *Roberto Devereux* in the acclaimed production by English director **Stephen Lawless** which sets the opera in a replica of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Italian conductor **Riccardo Frizza** conducts a stellar cast led by soprano **Sondra Radvanovsky** as Elisabetta (Elizabeth, Queen of England), mezzo-soprano **Jamie Barton** in her role debut as Sara (Duchess of Nottingham), tenor **Russell Thomas** in his first portrayal of the title role, Roberto (Robert, Earl of Essex) and **Andrew Manea** singing his first leading role with the Company as the Duke of Nottingham.

Set among the intrigues in the court of Elizabeth I, Donizetti's 1837 romance explores the Queen of England's fateful choice between duty and love. *Roberto Devereux* features some of the composer's most demanding vocal music and is the culmination of his fascination with the Tudor dynasty.

When she performed the title role of Bellini's *Norma* at San Francisco Opera in 2014, Sondra Radvanovsky's performance was hailed by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as "a catalog of operatic virtues" including the aria "Casta diva," which she "unfurled in elegantly arching phrases that grew in intensity as they billowed higher and higher." The renowned American soprano makes her highly-anticipated return as the embattled Queen of England, Elisabetta. Radvanovsky made headlines at the Metropolitan Opera when she performed the leading roles in Donizetti's "triple crown" (*Anna Bolena*, *Maria Stuarda* and *Roberto Devereux*) in a single season. As a special attraction during her Bay Area engagement, Radvanovsky will offer a free master class at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music on Sunday, September 16 at 3 p.m. Visit [sfcmm.edu](http://sfcmm.edu) for more information; reservations are recommended.

Following her recent San Francisco Opera triumph in Wagner's *Ring* cycle, Jamie Barton takes to the War Memorial Opera House stage again in her role debut as Sara, Elisabetta's confidant and rival. Hailed by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for her "gleaming vocal tone that is evenly produced throughout a large range," the popular American mezzo-soprano will return to San Francisco Opera in June 2019 as Ježibaba in Dvořák's *Rusalka*.

American tenor Russell Thomas portrays the roguish Earl of Essex, titular hero of Donizetti's opera. Thomas made his Company debut in 2014 as Pollione in *Norma* alongside the Adalgisa of Jamie Barton and Norma of Sondra Radvanovsky. These performances of *Roberto Devereux* will see the reunion of this critically acclaimed group of bel canto luminaries. Romanian-American baritone and second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow Andrew Manea joins the trio to make his role debut as the Duke of Nottingham. Completing the cast are tenor **Amitai Pati** as Lord Cecil and bass-baritone **Christian Pursell** as Walter Raleigh.

Italian conductor and Donizetti champion **Riccardo Frizza** leads the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. Music director of the Donizetti Festival in the composer's hometown of Bergamo, Frizza made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2012 conducting Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* with subsequent appearances on the podium for Bellini's *I Capuletti e i Montecchi* and Puccini's *Tosca*. The production by **Stephen Lawless**, which was hailed as "absolutely thrilling" by the *Toronto Star* at its 2014 premiere at Canadian Opera Company, features set designs by the late **Benoît Dugardyn** who passed in March 2018, costume designs by **Ingeborg Bernerth**, lighting designed by **Christopher Akerlind** and choreography by San Francisco Opera Dance Master **Lawrence Pech**. The chorus is prepared by San Francisco Opera Chorus Director **Ian Robertson**.

San Francisco Opera's first and only previous performances of *Roberto Devereux* were presented in 1979 with a commanding cast headed by Montserrat Caballé as Elisabetta, Carlo Bini as Roberto,

Stefania Toczyska as Sara and Juan Pons as Nottingham. After the first performance, Caballé withdrew due to illness and was replaced by Ellen Kerrigan.

Sung in Italian with English supertitles, the six performances of the *Roberto Devereux* are scheduled for September 8 (7:30 p.m.), September 11 (7:30 p.m.), September 14 (7:30 p.m.), September 18 (7:30 p.m.), September 23 (2 p.m.), September 27 (7:30 p.m.), 2018.

### **TICKETS AND INFORMATION**

Tickets for *Roberto Devereux* are priced from \$26 to \$398. A \$2 facility fee is included in all Balcony sections. All other sections include a \$3 per ticket facility fee. For tickets, visit [sfopera.com](http://sfopera.com), call (415) 864-3330 or visit the San Francisco Opera Box Office. Standing Room tickets, which go on sale at 10 a.m. on the morning of each performance, are \$10 each, cash only, and limited to two tickets per person. Casting, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change.

Each presentation of *Roberto Devereux* at the War Memorial Opera House features a Pre-Opera Talk beginning 55 minutes prior to curtain by opera educator Marcia Green.

OperaVision screens, suspended from the ceiling of the balcony section at select performances, provide close-up and mid-range ensemble shots in high-definition video; English subtitles appear at the bottom of each screen. OperaVision is made possible by the Koret-Taube Media Suite. Visit [sfopera.com](http://sfopera.com) for OperaVision dates.

The War Memorial Opera House is located at 301 Van Ness Avenue. Patrons are encouraged to use public transportation to attend San Francisco Opera performances. San Francisco Opera is pleased to offer complimentary shuttle service to and from Civic Center BART station for all Fall 2018 mainstage performances. Shuttle service is offered 90 minutes before and 45 minutes following every performance. The War Memorial Opera House is within walking distance of the Civic Center BART Station and near numerous bus lines, including 5, 21, 47, 49 and the F Market Street. For further public transportation information, visit [bart.gov](http://bart.gov) and [sfmta.com](http://sfmta.com).

Van Ness Construction: Due to construction for the SFMTA Van Ness Improvement Project, vehicles are unable to pick-up and drop-off at 301 Van Ness Avenue, and bus lines 47, 49 and 90 may experience travel delays. Please use the white loading zone at 450 Franklin Street (behind the Opera House) for rideshare pick-up and drop-off. We suggest planning extra time.

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## **ROBERTO DEVEREUX CASTING AND CALENDAR**

\*Company Debut   ♪Role Debut   †Current Adler Fellow   •OperaVision  
All performances take place at the War Memorial Opera House.

**ROBERTO DEVEREUX** by Gaetano Donizetti  
Production New to San Francisco Opera

**September 8** (7:30 p.m.), **11\*** (7:30 p.m.), **14** (7:30 p.m.), **18** (7:30 p.m.), **23\*** (2 p.m.), **27\*** (7:30 p.m.), **2018**

Canadian Opera Company production  
Libretto by Salvatore Cammarano; based on the tragedy *Elisabeth d'Angleterre* by François Ancelot  
Sung in Italian with English supertitles  
Approximate running time: 2 hours, 47 minutes including one intermission

First performance:    Naples; October 28, 1837  
First SFO performance:                                      October 26, 1979  
Most recent SFO performance:                              1979 Season

### **Cast:**

|                                 |                               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Elisabetta (Elizabeth I)</i> | <b>Sondra Radvanovsky</b>     |
| <i>Roberto Devereux</i>         | <b>Russell Thomas</b> ♪       |
| <i>Sara</i>                     | <b>Jamie Barton</b> ♪         |
| <i>Duke of Nottingham</i>       | <b>Andrew Manea</b> † ♪       |
| <i>Lord Cecil</i>               | <b>Amitai Pati</b> † ♪        |
| <i>Walter Raleigh</i>           | <b>Christian Pursell</b> †* ♪ |
| <i>A Page</i>                   | <b>Ben Brady</b> *            |
| <i>Nottingham's Servant</i>     | <b>Igor Vieira</b>            |

### **Creative Team:**

|                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Conductor</i>         | <b>Riccardo Frizza</b>      |
| <i>Director</i>          | <b>Stephen Lawless</b>      |
| <i>Set Designer</i>      | <b>Benoît Dugardyn</b> *    |
| <i>Costume Designer</i>  | <b>Ingeborg Bernerth</b> *  |
| <i>Lighting Designer</i> | <b>Christopher Akerlind</b> |
| <i>Choreographer</i>     | <b>Lawrence Pech</b>        |
| <i>Chorus Director</i>   | <b>Ian Robertson</b>        |

**San Francisco Opera Orchestra, San Francisco Opera Chorus and San Francisco Opera Dance Corps**

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Wells Fargo is the Season Sponsor of San Francisco Opera.

OperaVision, high-definition projection screens featured in the upper Balcony level, is made possible by the Koret/Taube Media Suite.

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

*Roberto Devereux* is made possible, in part, by Keith and Priscilla Geeslin; Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem, through the Conductors Fund; and Joan & David Traitel, through the Great Singers Fund.



2018–19 Season Sponsor



High resolution downloadable photographs of *Roberto Devereux* and artists headshots are available at [sfopera.com/press](http://sfopera.com/press). For cast biographies, visit [sfopera.com](http://sfopera.com).

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