



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

UPDATED SCHEDULE FOR SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S RING FESTIVAL

JUST ADDED:

The Ring from the Pit Discussion with Members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, March 22 at 5:30 PM Pacific

What's Opera, Doc?: Panel Exploring Opera and Animation, March 26 at 5:30 PM Pacific



Scene from *Siegfried*, third part of the *Ring* cycle (Photo: Cory Weaver); San Francisco Opera cast and musicians onstage after 2018 performances of Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung* (Photo: Drew Altizer Photography)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (March 12, 2021) — San Francisco Opera's online *Ring Festival* continues throughout March with free streaming of Richard Wagner's four-part *The Ring of the Nibelung* and live ticketed events online. The *Ring Festival* schedule featuring an array of interviews, panel discussions and lectures with artists and scholars has been updated, including the addition of two new free events.

Ring Festival Newly Added Events

- March 22 at 5:30 pm PT — *The Ring from the Pit*, San Francisco Opera Tad and Dianne Taube General Director Matthew Shilvock hosts this conversation with

members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra about the skill, concentration and stamina required to rehearse and perform Wagner's 15-hour masterwork.

- March 26 at 5:30 pm PT — *What's Opera, Doc?*, a panel discussion exploring the intersection of opera and animation featuring Craig Kausen, Chairman of the Chuck Jones Center for Creativity and grandson of Jones who directed the Wagner-infused, 1957 Bugs Bunny classic; Pixar's Chief Creative Officer Pete Docter and moderated by San Francisco Opera Guild Program Manager John C. Morris, who performed the voice of Andy in the *Toy Story* films.

Ring Festival Updates

- March 19 at 1 pm PT — *Becoming Brünnhilde* will feature a conversation with three acclaimed sopranos who have performed the pivotal role of the Valkyrie on the War Memorial Opera House stage: Jane Eaglen (1995 and 1999), Nina Stemme (2010 and 2011) and Iréne Theorin (2018).
- March 25 at 5:30 pm PT — *Green Wagner: Environmental Themes and Challenges in Wagner's Ring* will include director Francesca Zambello, set designer Michael Yeargan and Wagner scholar Kirsten Paige.
- March 30 at 6:30 pm PT — Guests for the Festival Closing Toast will include mezzo-sopranos Jamie Barton and Ronnita Miller, director Francesca Zambello, scholar Naomi André with general director Matthew Shilvock

Complete schedule of upcoming events and *Ring Festival* ticket information are below. For further information, visit sfopera.com/ring.

Encompassing four operas—*Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*—Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*) is an unparalleled masterpiece of mythic drama and musical storytelling. San Francisco Opera's sold-out performances, filmed in HD at the War Memorial Opera House in summer 2018, are being streamed for free this month.

American director Francesca Zambello's acclaimed staging of the tetralogy, a co-production with Washington National Opera, features an international cast, including Iréne Theorin (Brünnhilde), Greer Grimsley (Wotan), Daniel Brenna (Siegfried), Karita Mattila (Sieglinde), Brandon Jovanovich (Siegmund and Froh), Falk Struckmann

(Alberich), Jamie Barton (Fricka, Waltraute and the Second Norn), Ronnita Miller (Erda and the First Norn) and many others, under the baton of conductor Donald Runnicles. Zambello's production, which utilizes imagery associated with American history, features the work of set designer Michael Yeargan, costume designer Catherine Zuber, lighting designer Mark McCullough and projection designers S. Katy Tucker and Jan Hartley.

Unveiled in 1876 at the composer's theater in Bayreuth, Germany, the *Ring* cycle remains one of the most ambitious works of art ever created. Its scope and synthesis of music, theater and stagecraft continue to offer inspiration and provocation to artists, critics and audiences. A "bucket list" cultural event, the *Ring* typically requires great expense for travel, tickets and accommodations while taking in the four operas in succession. Experiencing the *Ring* fosters a unique sense of community and, for some, an ongoing relationship with the work. Through free streams of San Francisco Opera's 2018 production and the calendar of ancillary events, the *Ring* experience is now available to all.

The *Ring Festival* is dedicated to the memory of beloved Company Sponsor Ann Getty, for whom the *Ring* was the pinnacle of human creativity.

STREAMING SCHEDULE

March 6–7

DAS RHEINGOLD: In the cycle's prelude, greed and vengeance trigger a chain of events fraught with corruption and struggle (2 hours, 32 minutes)

March 13–14

DIE WALKÜRE: A father's blinding ambition and a daughter's defiance drive the story forward. (3 hours, 46 minutes)

March 20–21

SIEGFRIED: A fearless, young hero battles otherworldly challenges on a journey to discover his destiny. (3 hours, 56 minutes)

March 27–28

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG: The cycle reaches its transcendent climax with a suspenseful tale of bravery, sacrifice, destruction and renewal. (4 hours, 24 minutes)

Each free opera stream is viewable on demand with registration at sfopera.com, beginning at 10 am (Pacific) on the first streaming date through 11:59 pm the following day. Current San Francisco Opera subscribers and members (donors of \$75 and up) retain access to opera titles after their window of public access.

RING FESTIVAL TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Individual tickets to live ancillary events: \$15 (Admission to the March 30 Closing Night Toast is available to Festival Pass and All-Access Festival Pass holders only).

Festival Pass (all Festival events): \$99 (\$69 for San Francisco Opera subscriber/donor)

All-Access Festival Pass (Includes the Ring Festival Pass and a \$75 tax-deductible donation that grants access to San Francisco Opera online streaming portal, including the 2018 *Ring* cycle productions after initial stream period): \$144

On-demand recordings of Festival events will be available to ticket holders 24 hours after each event.

Registration for free events: To register for *The Ring from the Pit*, visit [this link](#). For What's Opera, Doc?, please register [here](#).

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit sfopera.com/ringfestival or call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330.

Free Festival Passes will be offered to high school and college students and teachers (requests can be sent to patronservices@sfopera.com from the school e-mail address).

UPCOMING LIVE RING FESTIVAL EVENTS (March 12–30)

All live events take place on Zoom, allowing participants to ask questions of the artists and presenters.

Saturday, March 13 (1 pm PT), 2021

DIE WALKÜRE: I Saw the World End: Exploring Wagner's *Ring*, lecture by San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna (individual tickets: \$15) Explore the myth, music and majesty of *The Ring of the Nibelung* with San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna. In Wagner's *Die Walküre*, the second

opera of the *Ring*, Wotan's warrior-maiden daughter Brünnhilde is destined to become the self-sacrificing savior of mankind (but not the gods).

Tuesday, March 16 (5:30 pm PT), 2021

CONFRONTING CONTROVERSY: THE RING IN THE 21ST CENTURY, lecture by William Berger (individual tickets: \$15)

Does Wagner have a place in the world today? Can we, as we seek new and expanded audiences, justify the centrality of Wagner in the world of opera and beyond? William Berger, lecturer, Metropolitan Opera commentator and author of two books about the composer, including *Speaking of Wagner: Talking to Audiences about the Ring of the Nibelung*, looks at the challenge and importance of this endlessly compelling work as we reengage with its glories and problems into the future.

****Updated****

Friday, March 19 (1 pm PT), 2021

BECOMING BRÜNNHILDE: A Conversation with Irène Theorin, Nina Stemme and Jane Eaglen; hosted by Stephen A. Brown (individual tickets: \$15)

The heroine of Wagner's *Ring* cycle, Brünnhilde, is one of the most challenging roles in the dramatic soprano repertoire. Hear how Irène Theorin, Nina Stemme and Jane Eaglen tackled this role at San Francisco Opera and beyond. Former Metropolitan Opera Company Manager Stephen A. Brown moderates the conversation, followed by a Q&A.

Saturday, March 20 (1 pm PT), 2021

SIEGFRIED: I Saw the World End: Exploring Wagner's *Ring*, lecture by San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna (individual tickets: \$15)

Explore the myth, music and majesty of *The Ring of the Nibelung* with San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna. In Wagner's *Siegfried*, the third opera of the *Ring*, the central figure is the great mythic hero Siegfried, who slays a dragon and wins himself the fateful ring and then sets out on a path to claim his destined bride, Brünnhilde.

Saturday, March 20 (4 pm PT), 2021

DINING ON THE RHINE: FOOD, WINE AND WAGNER'S *RING* CYCLE, a conversation with opera expert Fred Plotkin and mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton (individual tickets: \$15)

A self-proclaimed *Ring*-nut and a leading authority on Italian food and cooking, Fred Plotkin explores Wagner's *Ring* through food with mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton and

shares gastronomic clues found in the operas to make the perfect “Wagner Meal Cycle.”

****JUST ADDED****

Monday, March 22 (5:30 pm PT), 2021

THE RING FROM THE PIT (Free)

It doesn't just require skill. It takes a community. Stamina. And over 100 hours of rehearsal. Hear San Francisco Opera Orchestra musicians share their experience of bringing Richard Wagner's master score for the *Ring* to life, moderated by Company General Director Matthew Shilvock.

Tuesday, March 23 (5:30 pm PT), 2021

(RHEIN)GOLD RUSH: A HISTORY OF THE RING IN SAN FRANCISCO, lecture by San Francisco Opera Director of Archives Barbara Rominski and Senior Manager Communications Jeffery McMillan (individual tickets: \$15)

Wagner began work on what would become *The Ring of the Nibelung* in 1848, the same year that gold was discovered in California. By the 1890s, touring companies had introduced *Die Walküre* to San Francisco stages and full *Ring* cycles soon followed, including San Francisco Opera's first star-studded production in 1935. Utilizing rarely seen materials from the San Francisco Opera Archives, this multimedia presentation explores 140 years of Bay Area fascination and engagement with one of the most ambitious works of art.

****Updated****

Thursday, March 25 (5:30 pm PT), 2021

GREEN WAGNER: ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES AND CHALLENGES IN WAGNER'S RING, interview with director Francesca Zambello, set designer Michael Yeargan and Wagner scholar Kirsten Paige (individual tickets: \$15)

The *Ring* begins with the purity of nature and ends in flames. Over the course of Wagner's 15-hour masterpiece, we experience how the quest for power and wealth leads to the destruction of the environment. *Ring* director Francesca Zambello and set designer Michael Yeargan join Stanford University lecturer and Wagner scholar Kirsten Paige to discuss the themes of the environment and warnings we must heed in order to slow down climate change.

Friday, March 26 (11 am PT), 2021

BREAKING BARRIERS AT BAYREUTH: In Conversation with Grace Bumbry, hosted by baritone Kenneth Overton (individual tickets: \$15)

60 years after becoming the first Black singer to perform at Wagner's Bayreuth Festival, Grace Bumbry reflects with lauded baritone and associate producer of the

upcoming documentary *Black Opera* Kenneth Overton on this pivotal moment in history in the context of urgent calls for racial equality.

****JUST ADDED****

Friday, March 26 (5:30 pm PT), 2021

WHAT'S OPERA, DOC?: ANIMATION AND OPERA: Panel Discussion with Craig Kausen, Pete Docter, moderated by John C. Morris (free)

BRAVO! CLUB hosts this free conversation about the intersection between opera and animated films, including the Wagner-filled 1957 Bugs Bunny classic, "What's Opera, Doc?" The discussion between Craig Kausen, Chairman of the Chuck Jones Center for Creativity and grandson of Jones who directed "What's Opera, Doc?," and Pixar's Chief Creative Officer Pete Docter will be moderated by San Francisco Opera Guild Education Program Manager John C. Morris, who is also the voice of Andy in the *Toy Story* films.

Saturday, March 27 (1 pm PT), 2021

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG: I Saw the World End: Exploring Wagner's *Ring*, lecture by San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna (individual tickets: \$15)

Explore the myth, music and majesty of *The Ring of the Nibelung* with San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna. In the conclusion of the *Ring*, *Götterdämmerung*, we watch the world end and a new one begin. The ring is returned to its riverbed home cleansed of its curse, and the natural order is restored with the promise of renewal and rebirth for mankind.

Saturday, March 27 (4 pm PT), 2021

KIRSTEN FLAGSTAD: A BRÜNNHILDE FOR THE AGES, lecture by writer Paul Thomason, co-hosted by Kirsten Flagstad Museum Director Annika E. Engelhart (individual tickets: \$15)

When Kirsten Flagstad made her historic Metropolitan Opera debut in 1935, it had far-reaching consequences for opera in America including prompting San Francisco Opera to take the enormous leap of presenting the Company's first-ever *Ring* cycle that autumn. Whatever she sang, she was box office gold and established lofty standards in her mostly Wagnerian repertory. Co-hosted by writer Paul Thomason and Annika E. Engelhart, director of the Kirsten Flagstad Museum in Hamar, Norway, this is an in-depth look at a pivotal figure in opera with archival recordings and photographs.

Tuesday, March 30 (5:30 pm PT), 2021

FEMINISM AND THE RING, a discussion with mezzo-sopranos Jamie Barton and Ronnita Miller and director Francesca Zambello, moderated by author and professor Naomi André (individual tickets: \$15)

Ring composer and librettist Richard Wagner was no feminist. And yet he wrote such strong female characters, from earth goddess Erda to Wotan's wife, Fricka, and his daughter Brünnhilde, the heroine of the story. *Ring* director Francesca Zambello and mezzo-sopranos Ronnita Miller (Erda 2018) and Jamie Barton (Fricka, Waltraute, Second Norn 2018) join author and professor in Women's Studies at University of Michigan Naomi André for a conversation about the complexity of female characters in the *Ring* and the power of women to heal destruction.

****Updated****

Tuesday, March 30 (6:30 pm PT), 2021

FESTIVAL CLOSING TOAST (Special Event for Festival Pass holders and All-Access Festival Pass holders only)

Toast to the finale of the month-long *Ring Festival* in a lively discussion between San Francisco Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock, *Ring* director Francesca Zambello, author and opera scholar Naomi André and mezzo-sopranos Jamie Barton and Ronnita Miller.

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PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable photographs, including headshots, for San Francisco Opera's Ring Festival are available at sfopera.com/press

For further press information, please contact San Francisco Opera Communications:

Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / jinouye@sfopera.com

Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / jmcmillan@sfopera.com

Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / tconcepcion@sfopera.com