2020 FALL SEASON CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

San Francisco Opera Performances at the War Memorial Opera House Expected To Resume With Spring 2021 Season

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (June 16, 2020) — San Francisco Opera today announced the difficult decision to cancel its Fall 2020 Season due to the ongoing pandemic. Based on current public health information and state and local guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the fall season—scheduled to open on September 11 with the Opening Night Celebration concert conducted by Music Director Designate Eun Sun Kim—cannot move forward as planned. San Francisco Opera will continue to present virtual events and experiences, stream opera performances from its archives and offer new digital content throughout this period.

San Francisco Opera’s Tad and Dianne Taube General Director Matthew Shilvock said: “It is heartbreaking to have to make this announcement today. It will mean a full year without opera on the War Memorial stage and the loss of projects that would have connected powerfully with our world today. It is hard to imagine an opera more resonant than Fidelio, particularly in what would have been a profound interpretation by our Music Director Eun Sun Kim and stage director Matthew Ozawa. We hope to find homes for the new projects of Fidelio, Così fan tutte and The Handmaid’s Tale in future seasons—they are all operas that speak to the creative potential of San Francisco Opera. As painful as this moment is, we remain a company of extraordinarily creative artists, artisans and technicians, dedicated to doing everything we can to bring opera to life in other contexts, whether digitally or live in other venues, as government mandates and critical issues of safety allow. The creative urge to share our art with audiences has never been stronger. I am so grateful to every member of the Opera family for their resilience and belief. We will keep the music alive.”
Caroline H. Hume Music Director Designate Eun Sun Kim said: “As I’ve been preparing Fidelio, I’ve been reminded of one of Beethoven’s most powerful ideals: *per aspera ad astra*, which means ‘through hardship to the stars.’ Perhaps this philosophy can offer inspiration to us now, while we are separated by physical distance, each nurturing our own small flames of dedication to our beloved art form. When our orchestra, chorus and loyal audiences are finally reunited at the War Memorial, these individual lights will be magnified, reminding us all of the community we continue to build with each note played and sung. We must take comfort in the knowledge that this time of hardship is not our ultimate destination—we will persevere until we reach those stars.”

The Fall 2020 Season, spanning September 11 through December 6, was scheduled to include 37 performances of five operas, including a new production of Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Fidelio*, the continuation of the Company’s Mozart-Da Ponte Trilogy with a new staging of *Cosi fan tutte*, the highly anticipated West Coast premiere of Poul Ruders’ modern masterpiece *The Handmaid’s Tale* and revivals of Verdi’s *Rigoletto* and Puccini’s *La Bohème*. Additional events now canceled include the free *Opera in the Park* concert on October 18 and the Adler Fellows’ showcase, *The Future Is Now*.

San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Opera Guild’s benefit events celebrating the opening of the Company’s 98th Season—*Opera Ball*, *Opera Supper* and *BRAVO! CLUB Gala*—have also been canceled. The Opera and the Guild are currently in discussions about finding alternate, virtual ways to celebrate the traditional opening weekend and will announce further information later this summer.

Due to the current situation, which caused the cancellation of all performances in the War Memorial Opera House from March 7 to the present time, the Opera, San Francisco Ballet and San Francisco War Memorial have agreed to reschedule the final phase of the War Memorial Opera House seat replacement previously scheduled for May–August 2021. The rescheduling will allow for the possibility to keep as much performance activity as possible in the Opera House once it is safe to reopen to the public. Further updates about the seat upgrade project will be shared as they become available.

San Francisco Opera expects to return to the War Memorial Opera House stage for the Spring 2021 Season as planned. Opening on April 25 and running through May 16, the season includes Gioachino Rossini’s timeless comedy *The Barber of Seville* (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), the Company premiere of Alexander Zemlinsky’s rarely performed *Der Zwerg*...
and concerts starring Lianna Haroutounian and Iréne Theorin with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

Virtual events and new digital content will continue to be featured through the Company’s Opera is ON platform at sfopera.com/opera-is-on, launched in April 2020 to foster continued connections with the San Francisco Opera community and share great artistry worldwide. A digital venue for engagement with opera featuring streamed productions from the Company’s archives, Spotify playlists, regularly refreshed content including articles and blog posts, and new musical performances, Opera is ON is a resource that will continue to expand over the coming months. In addition, San Francisco Opera’s Department of Diversity, Equity and Community and San Francisco Opera Guild have moved many of their education and community programs online; for more information, visit sfopera.com and sfoperaguild.com.

Fall season ticketholders will be contacted with options including contributing the value of their tickets as a tax-deductible donation, receiving a gift certificate for the value of their tickets or obtaining a full refund. Ticket holders may also visit sfopera/fall2020 now to select their preferred ticket options. San Francisco Opera is particularly grateful for donations during this challenging time. Patrons who have purchased tickets to Opening Night events including Opera Ball will be contacted about their options, including donations or full refunds.

Tickets for the Spring 2021 Season are currently available on subscription. Single (non-subscription) tickets will go on sale in the fall. Current Spring 2021 Season ticket holders will be contacted later this summer regarding their seating locations.

The Company extends its gratitude to all of its patrons for their understanding and unwavering support. San Francisco Opera’s Box Office windows located at 301 Van Ness Avenue remain closed in accordance with the public closure of the War Memorial Opera House & Performing Arts Center, but the Box Office team is available to assist patrons by phone at (415) 864-3330, Monday 10 am–5 pm and Tuesday–Saturday 10 am–6 pm. Due to the processing of patrons holding tickets for canceled Summer 2020 Season performances, processing of Fall 2020 Season funds is expected to begin on July 15. San Francisco Opera thanks patrons for their patience and apologizes for any inconvenience this may cause.
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

Follow San Francisco Opera on:

High-resolution, downloadable photographs of San Francisco Opera’s 2020–21 Season, Opera is ON and additional images are available at sfopera.com/press.

For further press information, please contact:
Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / jinouye@sfopera.com
Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / jmcmillan@sfopera.com
Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / tconcepcion@sfopera.com