



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

IAN ROBERTSON LEADS *SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CHORUS IN CONCERT*
DECEMBER 11 AND 12 AT DIANNE AND TAD TAUBE ATRIUM THEATER

Concerts Will Honor Ian Robertson's 35 Seasons as Chorus Director and
Feature a Newly Commissioned Work by Composer Cava Menzies

****Extremely Limited Availability; For Ticket Inquiries, Please Call San
Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330**



San Francisco Opera Chorus Director Ian Robertson (Photo: Kristen Loken);
Robertson leading the Opera Chorus in concert (Photo: Matthew Washburn); composer Cava Menzies

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (November 10, 2021) — The San Francisco Opera Chorus will command the spotlight in the intimate Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater for *San Francisco Opera Chorus In Concert: Celebrating Ian Robertson* on Saturday, December 11 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, December 12 at 2 pm. The concerts will be conducted by Chorus Director Ian Robertson, who retires at the end of this year, capping a career of 35 seasons, 375 productions and over 2,000 performances at the helm of the Company's acclaimed Opera Chorus. Both concerts have extremely limited ticket availability; to inquire about tickets, please call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330.

In recognition of the musical excellence Robertson has brought to San Francisco Opera throughout his tenure, the Company commissioned Oakland-based composer Cava Menzies to create a new work in honor of Maestro Robertson for these concerts. Along with the world premiere of Menzies' "Invitation to Love," a choral setting of a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar, Robertson will conduct the 44 singers of the Opera Chorus, with Associate Chorus Master Fabrizio Corona at the piano, in a diverse program of works.

Ian Robertson said: "I'm so thrilled to conduct the wonderful San Francisco Opera Chorus in these concerts marking the end of my tenure as Chorus Director. We will present an eclectic program of opera chorus highlights, seldom performed works and contemporary choral music, including the world premiere of a newly commissioned piece. I have long admired the talents and flexibility of our Chorus artists, and it gives me great pleasure to celebrate them and our work together in this way."

An annual event since 2016, except 2020 due to the pandemic, *San Francisco Opera Chorus In Concert* showcases the Company's choral forces in an array of music, from a cappella pieces to accompanied works drawn from the opera and choral repertoires. This year's celebratory event includes many of Robertson's favorites, including choruses from operas by Bernstein, Donizetti, Handel, Higdon, Joplin, Mozart, Offenbach, Puccini, and Verdi, along with sacred works by Charpentier and J.S. Bach and choral arrangements and works by Canteloube, Ravel, Cava Menzies, Florence Price, Kate Rusby and Joan Szymko.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Both performances of *San Francisco Opera Chorus In Concert: Celebrating Ian Robertson* have extremely limited availability. For information and updates about ticket availability, please call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330.

In compliance with city health mandates, San Francisco Opera requires proof of vaccination and photo ID for all patrons ages 12 and up to attend performances in the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater. Face masks are required, and the concert will have a reduced capacity to allow for greater spacing in the seating area. For complete information about the Company's health and safety protocols, visit sfopera.com/safetyfirst.

To ensure flexibility for patrons in this transitional season, no-fee exchanges will be accepted up to two hours before performances. Refunds will be available if patrons must miss the concert due to COVID. Refund requests must be made at least two hours before the performance.

ABOUT CHORUS DIRECTOR IAN ROBERTSON

Throughout his 35 seasons as San Francisco Opera's chorus director, Ian Robertson has prepared the Opera Chorus for 375 productions, including 14 world premieres, and more than 2,000 performances. The Scotland native has also conducted several works for the Company, including *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Rigoletto*, *Turandot* and *Lohengrin*.

Robertson has led the San Francisco Opera Chorus through dramatic expansions of the Company's stage repertoire with significant premieres and the integration of large-scale works only attempted by a handful of companies worldwide. A shortlist of highlights and achievements includes the American premiere of Messiaen's monumental and rarely performed *Saint François d'Assise*, Berlioz's epic *Les Troyens (The Trojans)*, Prokofiev's *War and Peace* and two productions of Britten's *Billy Budd*.

Under Robertson's leadership, the San Francisco Opera Chorus has garnered widespread acclaim and was the subject of the 1991 Academy Award-winning documentary, *In the Shadow of the Stars*. Robertson has likewise been the recipient of many awards, including the Messiaen prize for his work on the 2002 American premiere of *Saint François d'Assise*. In 2012, then general director David Gockley awarded Robertson the Opera Medal, San Francisco Opera's highest honor, in recognition of his dedication and artistic vision. Robertson's 35 years as San Francisco Opera's Chorus Director constitute the longest tenure of any individual to hold that artistic leadership role in Company history. Prior to joining San Francisco Opera in 1987, Robertson was a conductor and chorus director with Scottish Opera from 1978–87. He also served as artistic director of the Grammy-winning San Francisco Boys Chorus from 1996–2019 and is currently their artistic director emeritus.

ABOUT CAVA MENZIES

Multidisciplinary musician, visual artist and educator Cava Menzies is a founding music faculty member at the Oakland School for the Arts and served as the artistic director of

the school 2015–2018. She is a 2014 National Artist Teaching Fellow and has been a guest faculty member for Berklee College of Music's week-long music intensives in Los Angeles and Puerto Rico. She served on the board of the San Francisco Chapter for the Recording Academy and was a quarterfinalist for the 2018 Grammy Music Educator Awards. Menzies is the founder of the brand COLORQUEEN, a multidisciplinary platform that highlights her integrated visual art, music and travel work. She holds a BA from the Berklee College of Music and a MM from the University of Miami. Mezies resides in Oakland, California.

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CHORUS IN CONCERT: CELEBRATING IAN ROBERTSON

Saturday, December 11 at 7:30 pm

Sunday, December 12 at 2 pm

Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater

Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera

Veterans Building (4th floor), 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco

General admission: \$39 ***Ticket availability for both dates is extremely limited; please call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330.

Chorus Director Ian Robertson, conductor

Associate Chorus Master Fabrizio Corona, piano

San Francisco Opera Chorus

The concert program highlights beloved opera choruses by Mozart, Puccini and Verdi and more contemporary works by Florence Beatrice Price, Joan Szymko, Kate Rusby and the world premiere of a new work commissioned by San Francisco Opera from Bay Area composer Cava Menzies in honor of Ian Robertson, who retires this year after 35 years as the Company's chorus director.

PROGRAM (Subject to change)

Marc-Antoine Charpentier—Te Deum (excerpts)

Prelude

Te Deum Laudamus

Te aeternum Patrem

Plenti Sunt Coeli

Johann Sebastian Bach—*Wohl mir, dass ich Jesum habe*, Chorale from BWV 147

George Frideric Handel—*Semele*: "Endless Pleasure"
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart—*Idomeneo*: "Placido è il mar"
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart—*Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)*: "Heil sei euch Geweihten"
Gaetano Donizetti—*L'Elisir d'Amore*: "Bel conforto al mietitore"
Gaetano Donizetti—*Lucia di Lammermoor*: "Per te d'immenso giubilo"
Giuseppe Verdi—*Nabucco*: "Va, pensiero"
Giacomo Puccini—*Madama Butterfly*: Humming Chorus
Giuseppe Verdi—*La Traviata*: "Noi siamo zingarelle"
Giuseppe Verdi—*La Traviata*: Di Madride noi siam mattadori
Jacques Offenbach—*La Belle Hélène (excerpts)*
 Procession of the Kings of Greece
 Bacchanale
 The Game of Geese
Florence Beatrice Price—"Weathers"
Jennifer Higdon—*Cold Mountain*: "Our Beautiful Country (Chorus of the Dead)"
Joseph Canteloube—*Songs of the Auvergne*: "Bailèro"
Maurice Ravel—*Trois Chansons*
 "Nicolette"
 "Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis"
 "Ronde"
Gabriela Lena Frank—*Two Mountain Songs*
 "Envuelto por el Viento"
 "Picaflor Esmeralda"
Cava Menzies—"Invitation to Love" (World Premiere)**
Joan Szymko—"All Works of Love"
Scott Joplin—*Treemonisha*: "We're goin' around"
Kate Rusby—"Underneath the Stars" (arranged by Jim Clements)
Leonard Bernstein—*Candide*: "Make our garden grow"

**Commissioned by San Francisco Opera in honor of Ian Robertson

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Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera.

San Francisco Opera would like to acknowledge the team of UCSF doctors who have provided guidance in planning the Company's safe return to the stage. Thank you to Drs. George Rutherford, Mark Almond, Robert Harrison, Sânziana Roman and Clark Rosen.

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To obtain further press information, including photographs of Ian Robertson and the San Francisco Opera Chorus, please visit sfopera.com/press or contact:

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