



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA GUILD

**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PRESENTS
OPERA BALL 2018: ¡VIVA LA NOCHE! SEPTEMBER 7
LED BY CO-CHAIRS SHANNON CRONAN AND KATHY HUBER**

**Opera Ball and Bravo! Club Opening Night Gala Inaugurate
San Francisco Opera's 96th Season and Opening of José Cura's Bold Staging of
Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci***



Opera Ball 2018 led by Jane Mudge, Riccardo Benavides, and gala co-chairs Shannon Cronan and Kathy Huber [left];
Scenes from *Opera Ball 2018*. ©Drew Altizer Photography

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (September 4, 2018) — To inaugurate San Francisco Opera's 96th season and the opening night double bill of Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (or *Cav/Pag*), San Francisco Opera Guild presents ***Opera Ball 2018: ¡Viva La Noche!*** on Friday, September 7, 2018. Co-chaired by **Shannon Cronan** and **Kathy Huber**, this sold out gala benefit to raise funds for the Company's education and outreach programs features event design by **J. Riccardo Benavides** and dinner by **McCalls Catering & Events**. Debuting at this year's event, **Chalk Hill Estate Vinyards and Winery** is the official Opera Ball Wine Sponsor, joining **Roederer Estate** as the Sparkling Wine Sponsor and **Neiman Marcus**, the Dinner Sponsor. Honorary Chairs for *Opera Ball 2018* are **John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn** and **Diane B. Wilsey**.

Opera Ball 2018 and the annual **BRAVO! Club Opening Night Gala** take place on the campus of the Beaux Arts-designed San Francisco War Memorial & Performing Arts Center in connection with the premier of *Cav/Pag* presented in the bold production by Argentine tenor, conductor and opera director **José Cura**. Italian conductor **Daniele Callegari** makes his Company debut leading the San Francisco

Opera Orchestra, Chorus and cast and the production is staged in revival by Argentine director **Jose Maria Condemí**.

Inspiration for *Opera Ball 2018: ¡Viva La Noche!* arose from a visit by Benavides and the co-chairs to the La Boca district of Buenos Aires, the atmospheric neighborhood that provides the setting of Cura's vision for *Cav/Pag*. Channeling the Italianate elegance of the Caminito and La Boca's vital street culture, Benavides has uses bandoneon, tango and cool colors to recreate a festive Argentine evening inside the tented pavilion adjacent to the Opera House. Following a chic cocktail reception at 5 p.m. in the grand foyer of the Opera House, guests will proceed to the pavilion at 6 p.m. to enjoy a dinner by McCalls executive chef **Josip Martinovic**. Attendees will then adjourn to the Opera House for the 8 p.m. performance of the verismo double bill and return to the tent at 11 p.m. for an after-party milonga featuring tango; a tempting, sweet and savory buffet and dancing to the sounds of **Pop Rocks**.

San Francisco Opera Guild President **Jane Mudge** said: "Opera Ball is the jewel in the crown of the Opera Guild's mission. We take great pride in creating an evening that will surprise and delight, but most of all keep our guests attending and supporting this beautiful art form year after year. This year's Ball is set in Buenos Aires, a beautiful city with a little grit and a lot of flair—perfect for San Francisco!"

One of the premier philanthropic evenings on the West Coast, *Opera Ball* brings together local and national corporate, political, civic and charitable leaders who are committed to making music education available to all and introducing students to the transformative experiences of seeing San Francisco Opera performances on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House. Proceeds from *Opera Ball* benefit the education programs of the Opera Guild and San Francisco Opera Association. Mudge said, "The great motivator behind this year-long fundraising and organizational effort is knowing that our programs will make an impact on the lives of today's youth in San Francisco and the greater Bay Area."

The annual BRAVO! Club Opening Night Gala, led by BRAVO! President **Shannon Eliot** and gala co-chairs **Xanadu Bruggers** and **Anjali Menon**, begins with a pre-performance reception on the Opera House Loggia at 6:30 p.m. Following the performance of *Cav/Pag*, the BRAVO! gala festivities continue at the Green Room in the Veterans Building with an after-party beginning at 11 p.m. featuring dancing to the sounds of **DJ Chris Fox** and an outdoor Bourbon and Rye tasting hosted by **Wright & Brown Distilling Co.** The BRAVO! gala is designed by **Kate Siegel Fine Events** with catering by **Paula LeDuc**.

San Francisco Opera's BRAVO! Club is a dedicated and dynamic group of young professionals throughout the Bay Area. With a love of opera and a burgeoning interest in exploring arts and culture, members enjoy discounted tickets and exclusive educational and social events, while helping to build the future audience for San Francisco Opera.

The double bill of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* was last presented by San Francisco Opera in 2003. *Cavalleria Rusticana* features Russian mezzo-soprano **Ekaterina Semenchuk** as Santuzza, Italian

tenor **Roberto Aronica** as Turiddu and, in his first performances in the United States, Greek baritone **Dimitri Platanius** as Alfio. *Pagliacci* stars Armenian soprano **Lianna Haroutounian** as Nedda, Italian tenor **Marco Berti** as Canio, Platanius as Tonio and American baritone **David Pershall** as Silvio.

OPERA BALL 2018 and BRAVO! CLUB GALA / TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Opera Ball 2018: Viva la Noche! is sold out. Tickets for the double bill of Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* are available in limited quantities. For performance tickets, visit sfopera.com, call (415) 864-3330 or visit the San Francisco Opera Box Office at 301 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco. Casting, programs, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change.

Full ticket packages for BRAVO! Club's Opening Night Gala are sold out. Packages for the performance and after party only are available in limited quantities. For more information about BRAVO! or to join, visit sfopera.com/bravo or call (415) 864-3330.

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About the Opera Ball 2018 Co-Chairs

Shannon Cronan has been an active member of the San Francisco Opera Guild since 2011 and served in various roles, including co-chair of the 2012 Spring Gala. A full-time agent with Compass, Cronan enjoys helping people fulfill their dreams in properties and housing. Her attention to detail, negotiating skills and personable nature have fueled her success in business and benefited the San Francisco community through her volunteer work. Cronan has served as President, Gala Chair and Student Showcase Chair with the San Francisco Ballet Auxiliary. Along with her teenage son and daughter, she volunteers with the National Charity League and Service Corps. Her passion for volunteering and serving her community originated during her time at Santa Clara University, where she taught English as a second language to immigrants while earning her degree in broadcast journalism with a minor in French. Cronan is a Bay Area native who has spent the last two decades in San Francisco where she lives with her husband and two children.

Kathy Huber has focused much of her career leveraging her many years of commercial real estate experience, including her work as Director of Real Estate West at Gymboree, in aiding non-profit institutions. She was a founding partner and VP of Acquisitions for Alta Energy, Inc. and previously the founder and CEO of Market Insite Group. Huber is currently on the board of directors of San Francisco Opera Guild and co-chaired *An Evening on the Stage* in 2016. Her involvement with other philanthropic organizations includes San Francisco Ballet Auxiliary, where she chaired San Francisco Ballet's 2018 Opening Night Gala and the Student Showcase in 2013. She was previously president of the St. Francis Wood Women's League, a founding Board member of Children of Shelters and One Warm Coat, and she is a long-time member of the International Council of Shopping Centers where she served in key roles on the conference planning committee for the industry's sustainability conference. Huber graduated with a B.A. degree from DePauw University and lives in Belvedere with her husband.

Jane Mudge / San Francisco Opera Guild President

Jane Mudge, San Francisco Opera Guild president, is a co-owner of J.V. Staging, LLC, a property preparation and staging company, and a seasoned community fundraiser. Educated both locally and abroad, she received her B.A. from Santa Clara University. Her professionalism and integrity are rooted in her marketing and advertising experience and work with major clients including Visa USA, Dockers, Safeway, Inc. and California State commodity boards. She has served as San Francisco Opera Guild's Vice President of Fundraising and is a member of the Women's Board of California Pacific Medical Center. She has co-chaired numerous philanthropic events including *Opera Ball 2015*, San Francisco Opera Guild's 2012 Spring Gala, San Francisco Ballet's 2009 Opening Night Gala, French American Soirée des Arts and Celebrate Spring for Schools of the Sacred Heart. She resides in San Francisco with her two teenage daughters.

J. Riccardo Benavides / Opera Ball 2018 Event Designer

Renowned for his stylish taste, Benavides melds sophistication with enchantment. His beautiful designs bring a personal touch and an air of whimsy to every event. From an opulent gala retrospective for designer Oscar de la Renta to an 1,800-person extravaganza for Netflix, Benavides' extraordinary and dignified work has made its mark. Constantly inspired by the latest trends and fashions,

his original style is full of imagination, holding guests in a constant state of awe and intrigue. J. Riccardo Benavides' clients include San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Ballet, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Saks Fifth Avenue, British Motor Cars, The St. Regis Hotels, Churchill Museum in London, as well as intimate private client parties and events worldwide. For more information, visit ideas-events.com.

About Chalk Hill Estate Vineyards and Winery

Founded in 1972, Chalk Hill Estate Vineyards and Winery is the iconic wine estate of Sonoma County. Located in the Russian River Valley in Sonoma County, the estate is one of California's premier producers of luxury wines. For over four decades, Chalk Hill has produced exceptional wines that have received high acclaim from the trade, press and consumers. The unique topography, climatic and geological diversity of Chalk Hill creates an environment that allows for a wide range of varieties to be grown on the estate including chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, pinot gris, merlot, cabernet sauvignon, malbec, petit verdot, carmenère, syrah and semillon. The 1,300-acre Sonoma estate includes 350 acres of vineyards, a winery, a hospitality center, culinary gardens, residence, equestrian pavilion, sports fields, fishing and swimming ponds and a wilderness area.

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For further press information or to download photos of *Opera Ball*, please visit sfopera.com/press or contact:

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