



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

DEPARTMENT OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND COMMUNITY OFFERS
NEW INTERACTIVE TALKS:

APRIL: *HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MR. SHAKESPEARE*

MAY: *HAPPY BIRTHDAY, OPERA AFICIONADO* — FREE ADMISSION

JUNE: *LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING!* —
AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC APPRECIATION MONTH



William Shakespeare (April) ; Opera Aficionado (May) ; Life Every Voice and Sing! (June)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (March 31, 2021) — San Francisco Opera's Department of Diversity, Equity and Community (DEC) announced new *Opera Aficionado* virtual conversations from April through June. The focus in April will be operatic treasures inspired by the works of William Shakespeare, such as comparing the Bard's own dramatic scenes with the corresponding operatic counterparts. Then, throughout May, DEC and attendees will celebrate the first anniversary of the *Opera Aficionado* series with a month of free sessions, ranging in topics from favorite composers to opera's hidden moments and saluting the theme of *opera is for everyone*. Finally, during the month of June, DEC will honor African American Music Appreciation Month with a group of talks called *Lift Every Voice and Sing!* Subjects will

include opera performers of the Harlem Renaissance; Frederick Matthews, a longtime member of the San Francisco Opera; and the history-making singer Marian Anderson.

New in April, DEC will extend its tiered-pricing structure to *Opera Aficionado*, ensuring that programming is accessible to all. Students, educators and individuals in need may now purchase tickets for \$5 per lecture. People who can purchase tickets at a \$40 level enable another person to attend. The general admission price of \$20 remains, with the addition of discounts for those who purchase tickets to multiple sessions. All meetings in May are complimentary. Each 75-minute Zoom discussion offers music lovers around the world a front-row seat to scholarly talks and conversations and an opportunity to dialogue with fellow opera enthusiasts and special guests.

For tickets and more information, visit sfopera.com/aficionado

OPERA AFICIONADO CALENDAR

(programs subject to change)

APRIL: HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MR. SHAKESPEARE

- Sunday, April 4, 1 pm: From Page to Stage: Shakespeare at the Opera
Speaker: Kip Cranna
More operas are based on works of The Bard than on those of any other writer. Besides the famous adaptations by Giuseppe Verdi, there are Shakespearean music dramas by other well-known composers, like Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner, and some lesser-known works by Ambroise Thomas and living composers Aribert Reimann and Thomas Adès. San Francisco Opera's Dramaturg Emeritus Kip Cranna will compare video scenes of the original plays with their counterparts in opera and explore the surprising transformations that occur between "page and the stage."
- Sunday, April 11, 1 pm: Sir John Falstaff
Speaker: Alexandra Amati
Sir John Falstaff hails from Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. It was Giuseppe Verdi's last and only comic opera, *Falstaff*, however, that brought this jaunty character to life. Explore the playful mastery of this great work, where Falstaff remains in the hearts of opera lovers everywhere.
- Sunday, April 18, 1 pm: Romeos & Juliets
Speaker: Laura Prichard

In 1597, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* reimagined a pair of star-crossed lovers whose story defined and altered the genre of romantic drama. Dramaturge Laura Prichard explores the composers and operas that lent musical beauty to this classic tale of woe.

- Sunday, April 25, 1 pm: If Music Be the Food of Love: Shakespeare's Influence on Our Musical Heritage
Speaker: Cole Thomason-Redus
From Baroque art songs to modern-day TV, perhaps no other playwright or poet has had such a profound influence on our musical heritage as William Shakespeare. *Opera Aficionado* host Cole-Thomason-Redus leads viewers through a musical journey, surveying the vast and diverse musical impact of Shakespeare's words.

MAY: HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AFICIONADOS!

- Sunday, May 2, 1 pm: Kip, Kip, Hooray! 40 Years at San Francisco Opera: A Retrospective
Speakers: Kip Cranna and Cole Thomason-Redus
San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Kip Cranna has had a remarkable career with the Company. Since joining in 1979, he has witnessed the rise of stars, the creation of numerous new works and thousands of memorable moments on stage and behind the scenes. Join *Opera Aficionado*'s host, Cole Thomason-Redus, for this interview with Kip and explore Kip's fascinating journey that continues on after more than 40 years.
- Sunday, May 9, 1 pm: Our Favorite Opera Composers
Viewer's Choice — Speaker TBA
Verdi, Puccini, Mozart, Rossini — the list of favorite opera composers could go on and on. But who takes the top spot? Based on votes from *Opera Aficionado* attendees, we will identify and explore the life and work of our audience's favorite opera composer.
- Sunday, May 16, 1 pm: Our Favorite Moments in Opera
Speaker: Robert Hartwell
Professor and author Robert Hartwell's passion for opera transcends the Zoom screen and makes us all feel as though we're listening to the best of all stories. Join Robert as he explores his favorite moments in opera and *why* he loves them.
- Sunday, May 23, 1 pm: Opera's Hidden Gems
Viewer's Choice — Speaker TBA

The *prima donna* is beloved for their talent in stealing the spotlight, but what about the *seconda*? Some of the most finely crafted moments in opera belong not to the princess or nobleman but to the maid and servant. If opera has a best supporting award, who would be the nominees? Our Viewer's Choice Survey will determine the gems we love most in opera's best *hidden* moments.

JUNE: LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING! — AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC APPRECIATION MONTH

- Sunday, June 6, 1 pm: Landscape of Change: Interview with Frederick Matthews
Speakers: Frederick Matthews and Cole Thomason-Redus
For 37 seasons, baritone Frederick Matthews reigned as a pillar of the San Francisco Opera Chorus. Featured in the Academy Award-winning 1991 documentary *In the Shadow of the Stars*, Frederick was a beloved and prominent fixture on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House. His retirement in December of 2020—a year without live opera—left him devoid of that final bow, during which the entire house would have undoubtedly leapt to their feet with thunderous applause. Join us in our efforts to provide that moment of gratitude as we celebrate Frederick's career and the sweeping landscape of change witnessed during his decades-long journey with San Francisco Opera.
- Sunday, June 13, 1 pm: Opera in the Harlem Renaissance
Speaker: Melissa Givens
For many, the Harlem Renaissance points our thoughts towards smoky nightclubs like The Cotton Club, iconic singers like Billie Holiday and the jazz poetry of Langston Hughes. Beyond the most famous figures dominating the artistic mecca, lie the stories of African American opera singers and the Black opera companies that today remain almost forgotten. Professor and soprano Melissa Givens will take us on a journey into that renaissance and shed light onto the stages remembered only in obscure articles of Black history.
- Sunday, June 20, 1 pm: All About Marian Anderson
Speaker: Mark Burford
In 1939, contralto Marian Anderson was famously denied permission to perform at Washington D.C.'s Constitution Hall due to the color of her skin. At her historic Lincoln Memorial performance that same year, it was the content of her character and the voice of a century that delivered her into the hearts and homes of everyday

Americans. Professor Mark Burford will take us beyond that moment to share a more complete portrayal of this important character in African American Music History.

- Sunday, June 27, 1 pm: TBA
Check sfopera.com/aficionado for updates.

TICKETS: \$5-\$40

Students, educators and individuals in need: \$5/session.

General admission: \$20/session, discount available for multiple-sessions order.

Enable another person to attend*: \$40.

*This is not a tax-deductible contribution.

Tickets are available until noon on the day of each event at sfopera.com/aficionado.

San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by The Dolby Family, Carol and Dixon Doll, Bertie Bialek Elliott, Keith and Priscilla Geeslin, 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

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