



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA OPENS 99TH SEASON WITH
GIACOMO PUCCINI'S *TOSCA*; AUGUST 21–SEPTEMBER 5



Puccini's *Tosca* (Photo: Cory Weaver); Eun Sun Kim (Photo: Daniel Delang)

New Music Director Eun Sun Kim Leads San Francisco Opera Orchestra,
Chorus and Cast Featuring Ailyn Pérez, Michael Fabiano and Alfred Walker

Update: Proof of Vaccination Now Required for All Guests 12 and Up

Tickets Available at sfopera.com and (415) 864-3330

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (July 28, 2021; **updated August 13, 2021**) — San Francisco Opera inaugurates its 99th season and first under the baton of Caroline H. Hume Music Director Eun Sun Kim, with five performances of Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*, August 21–September 5. The Italian thriller, long associated with significant moments in San Francisco Opera's history, will be the first opera staged in the War Memorial Opera House since the pandemic shutdown. Kim leads the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, Chorus and a cast headed by Ailyn Pérez in the title role, tenor Michael Fabiano as Cavaradossi and Alfred Walker as Scarpia. The Company's "colorful and lavish" (*San Francisco Examiner*) production, first unveiled in 2018, is by director Shawna Lucey with sets and costumes designed by Robert Innes Hopkins and lighting by Michael Clark.

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Eun Sun Kim began her career in Europe and, with her 2017 American debut in Houston and subsequent triumphs on American opera house and concert hall stages, is recognized worldwide as an insightful musical interpreter. Her first performances with San Francisco Opera—"a company debut of astonishing vibrancy and assurance" (*San Francisco Chronicle*)—led to her December 2019 appointment as the Company's music director, a move the *New York Times* called "pathbreaking." Though Kim's highly anticipated return to the War Memorial stage was delayed by the shutdown, her European engagements continued to dazzle, including the 2020 Bastille Day concert telecast from Paris and livestreamed on YouTube. Returning to American concerts earlier this month at the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago, Kim was hailed by former *Chicago Tribune* critic John von Rhein for her conducting of Dvořák's Ninth Symphony: "She had the orchestra relaxing into the lyricism but also had them whipping up firmly dramatic climaxes" (Chicago Classical Review).

Kim takes to San Francisco Opera's podium on August 21 to lead *Tosca*, one of opera's most popular works. It will be her second time conducting Puccini's 1900 score since leading performances in the composer's native Italy at the Macerata Festival in 2014. Kim's inaugural season as San Francisco Opera's music director will also include *Live and In Concert: The Homecoming* with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and soloists Rachel Willis-Sørensen and Jamie Barton which will be simulcast for free to Oracle Park, home of the San Francisco Giants (September 10); a new production of Beethoven's *Fidelio* (October 14–30), the San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows' *The Future Is Now* concert (December 10) and a summer tribute to the music of Giuseppe Verdi (June 30, 2022).

Soprano Ailyn Pérez, known for her "remarkable vocal talent, combined with radiance and charm" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), returns to the War Memorial Opera House as the tragic, Roman diva, *Tosca*. Previously heard with San Francisco Opera as Violetta in two different productions of Verdi's *La Traviata* (2009 and 2014), Pérez brings her "melting sound and affecting vulnerability" (*New York Times*) to one of Puccini's greatest lyric heroines in a highly anticipated role debut.

Tosca's lover, the painter Cavaradossi, will be portrayed by Michael Fabiano in his first performances of the role in North America. The high-flying American tenor (Fabiano is also a pilot) first performed Cavaradossi last month at Opéra National de Paris followed by *Tosca* performances at Madrid's Teatro Real. Praised for his "muscular, richly colored tenor" (*Mercury News*) and singing with "full-throated ardor and heart-on-the-sleeve

anguish that felt real" (*Opera News*), Fabiano has already created a stir on social media with clips of his Cavaradossi from Paris, including his impassioned cries of "Vittoria, Vittoria" ("Victory!") from the opera's second act.

Bass-baritone Alfred Walker returns to San Francisco Opera as one of opera's greatest villains, Rome's corrupt chief of police, Scarpia. Walker's first engagement with the Company as Orest in Strauss' *Elektra* was hailed by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as "a formidable company debut" with "singing as ominous and sepulchral as his presence." The New Orleans native, whose credits include leading roles with the Metropolitan Opera, Washington National Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre, takes on Scarpia for the first time in his career.

The cast of *Tosca* is completed by San Francisco Opera veteran bass-baritone Dale Travis as the Sacristan, tenor Joel Sorensen as Spoletta, bass Solomon Howard as Angelotti and current San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows baritone Timothy Murray as Sciarrone, bass Stefan Egerstrom as the Jailer and soprano Elisa Sunshine as a Shepherd Boy. The Company's Chorus Director of 35 years, Ian Robertson, prepares the San Francisco Opera Chorus in his final season opener before retiring at the end of December 2021.

Shawna Lucey, who made her San Francisco Opera directorial debut with Verdi's *La Traviata* in 2017, remounts her 2018 *Tosca* production about which the *Mercury News* commented: "*Tosca* has always been about the devastating effects of power on individuals, and Lucey's staging ... gives it particular resonance for today." The sets and costumes of are designed by Robert Innes Hopkins, whose previous work on the War Memorial Opera House stage includes Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* (2004), Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri* (2005) and Wagner's *Lohengrin* (2012). Michael Clark is the lighting designer.

Beginning with the Company's 1923 inaugural season at the Civic Auditorium, *Tosca* has occupied a significant role in San Francisco Opera history. Presented in 39 of the Company's previous 98 seasons with extraordinary casts, the opera was selected for San Francisco Opera's first opening night in its new home, the Beaux-Arts War Memorial Opera House, on October 15, 1932. The Company's first new staging of *Tosca* was created by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle in 1972 to honor the Company's 50th anniversary. The original 1932 *Tosca* was recreated in 1997 for an archival production by Thierry Bosquet which commemorated the Company's 75th anniversary season and reopening of the Opera

House after closure for seismic retrofitting. *Tosca* will, once again, provide the occasion for a return to the War Memorial stage and the inception of Eun Sun Kim's music directorship.

Sung in Italian with English supertitles, the five performances of *Tosca* are scheduled for August 21 (7:30 pm), August 27 (7:30 pm), August 29 (2 pm), September 3 (7:30 pm) and September 5 (2 pm), 2021.

HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

Based on the latest medical advice and patron feedback, San Francisco Opera will now require proof of vaccination and photo ID for all patrons ages 12 and up to attend performances at the War Memorial Opera House and the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera during the 2021–22 Season. The Company is no longer able to allow entry to patrons with only a negative COVID test. With this new vaccination policy, the buffer seats will be safely removed for all five performances of *Tosca*, allowing as many people as possible to safely attend. To ensure the health and safety of audiences, artists and employees, comprehensive front and back-of-house safety protocols—developed in partnership with a team of University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) physicians led by epidemiologist Dr. George Rutherford—will be in place. For complete details and updates, visit sfopera.com/safetyfirst.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Subscriptions to San Francisco Opera's 99th Season are now on sale via the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330 and online at sfopera.com.

Single (non-subscription) tickets for *Tosca* and all Fall 2021 performances range from \$26 to \$398 and are now on sale via the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330 and online at sfopera.com.

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 a performance due to COVID. Refund requests must be made at least two hours before the performance.

For complete information about ticketing and seating policies for the current season, please visit sfopera.com/onstage.

All casting, programs, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change. For further information about San Francisco Opera's 2021–22 Season, visit sfopera.com/onstage.

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TOSCA CASTING AND CALENDAR

*San Francisco Opera Debut ♪Role Debut †Current Adler Fellow
All performances take place at the War Memorial Opera House.

TOSCA by Giacomo Puccini

August 21 (7:30 pm), 27 (7:30 pm), 29 (2 pm); September 3 (7:30 pm), 5 (2 pm), 2021

San Francisco Opera production

Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, based on the drama *La Tosca* by Victorien Sardou
Sung in Italian with English supertitles

Approximate running time: 2 hours, 45 minutes including two intermissions

First performance: Rome; January 14, 1900
First SFO performance: October 2, 1923
Most recent SFO performances: 2018–19 Season

Cast:

<i>Floria Tosca</i>	Ailyn Pérez ♪
<i>Mario Cavaradossi</i>	Michael Fabiano
<i>Baron Scarpia</i>	Alfred Walker ♪
<i>Cesare Angelotti</i>	Soloman Howard ♪
<i>Sacristan</i>	Dale Travis
<i>Spoletta</i>	Joel Sorensen
<i>Sciarrone</i>	Timothy Murray *♪†
<i>Jailer</i>	Stefan Egerstrom *♪†
<i>Shepherd boy</i>	Elisa Sunshine *♪†

Creative Team:

<i>Conductor</i>	Eun Sun Kim
<i>Director</i>	Shawna Lucey
<i>Production Designer</i>	Robert Innes Hopkins
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Michael Clark

San Francisco Opera Orchestra and San Francisco Opera Chorus

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.

Tosca is made possible, in part, by Carol and Dixon Doll; John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn; Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson; Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem; Joan and David Traitel; and Barbara A. Wolfe.

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, Peter Chin-Hong, Robert Harrison, Sânziana Roman and Clark Rosen.

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PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable photographs, including artist headshots and production images for *Tosca*, are available at sfopera.com/press

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