



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

NICOLA LUISOTTI TO MARK HIS FINAL SEASON AS SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MUSIC DIRECTOR IN 2017–18



Nicola Luisotti photos by Terrence McCarthy

SAN FRANCISCO (May 18, 2016) — San Francisco Opera Music Director Nicola Luisotti today announced that he will step down from his position at the end of his current contract, which expires on July 31, 2018. Mr. Luisotti, age 55, will continue to serve as San Francisco Opera music director through the 2017–18 Season. Today’s announcement was made in the War Memorial Opera House theater before the full company of staff, musicians, chorus, dancers and crew.

Announced by General Director David Gockley as the Company’s third music director in 2007, Mr. Luisotti assumed the position in September 2009. Since his Company debut in 2005 leading Verdi’s *La Forza del Destino*, the Italian Tuscan-born conductor has led over 30 San Francisco Opera productions and concerts to date.

“After much thought and realizing that I will have been associated with San Francisco Opera for over 12 years by the 2017–18 Season, I arrived at the difficult decision not to renew my contract and to look to new opportunities,” said **Nicola Luisotti**. He commented further that “I believe that close to a

decade is about the right time to be leading a company. I want the Company's General Director Designate Matthew Shilvock to be able to move freely into the future with his ideas, his artistic interests and to take San Francisco Opera into a new direction. As hard as it is for me to say this about a company I so dearly love, I sincerely believe this is the right path and the right time for me and San Francisco Opera. I'm proud to have served as the musical leader for this great company and look forward to fulfilling my duties over the next two seasons."

David Gockley said: "I want to express my profound thanks to Nicola for his work with San Francisco Opera over these past years. I've enjoyed professionally and personally collaborating with him and am very proud of his contributions. He has upheld the high musical and artistic standards of the Company and we have all benefited from his dedication, expertise and profound enthusiasm for this art form. I can think of no other person who embodies the love and passion of opera as much as Nicola Luisotti. I'm particularly heartened to know that Nicola will be returning to guest conduct and will continue to maintain his association with the Company. I wish him great success in his future endeavors and know that he will continue to affirm his status as one of the great conductors of his generation."

Matthew Shilvock, who becomes San Francisco Opera's seventh general director on August 1, commented, "I was deeply saddened when Maestro Luisotti told me he would not be coming back after the 2017–18 Season. He and I have talked about his decision in-depth many times over the past few months, and, while it was difficult to accept, I have come to understand the incredible selflessness with which he is making this change. He adores this company but he believes that, after a decade at the helm, both he and San Francisco Opera need fresh experiences and fresh artistic approaches."

"Nicola has made a huge impact on the artistic values of this Company and I am dedicated to ensuring we retain his incredible artistic contributions going forward," Mr. Shilvock said. "We've already begun discussing future engagements and I look forward to our future collaborations."

Mr. Shilvock continued, "Identifying a new music director will be one of the most critical duties of my first few years as general director, and I am committed to finding someone who can stand tall in the Company's lineage of our music directors: Nicola Luisotti, Donald Runnicles and Sir John Pritchard. I will start looking immediately, but will take the time necessary to find the right partner."

In recognition of the special artistry of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus, Maestro Luisotti said, "I wish to thank all members of the Company, orchestra, chorus and music staff who proved over these past seasons that they possess a great talent of realizing spectacular performances especially with such memorable productions of *Luisa Miller*, the world premiere of Marco Tutino's *La Ciociara (Two Women)*, *Mefistofele*, *Lohengrin*, *Salome*, *Norma*, the trio of Mozart-DaPonte operas, and the Verdi Requiem in a historic combined performance with the Teatro San Carlo of Naples."

Luisotti is scheduled to lead this summer's *Don Carlo* followed by opening San Francisco Opera's 94th season in September 2016 with a new Royal Opera, Covent Garden/Beijing National Centre for the Performing Arts co-production of *Andrea Chénier* and the annual Opera in the Park concert at Golden Gate Park. Later in the season, Luisotti will lead a new production of *Aida* and a revival of *Rigoletto*. This past season Nicola Luisotti has scored great international acclaim for his conducting engagements at Madrid's Teatro Real, Milan's Teatro alla Scala, London's Royal Opera House and most recently in Paris for a new production of *Rigoletto*.

Nicola Luisotti's international credits include regular guest appearances at London's Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Madrid's Teatro Real, Opéra national de Paris, the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Dresden Opera, Frankfurt Opera, Valencia's Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, Bologna's Teatro Comunale, Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice, Teatro San Carlo of Naples, Teatro Regio di Torino, Los Angeles Opera, Seattle Opera and Canadian Opera Company. His artistic collaborations with leading symphony orchestras include those of Berlin, Madrid, Tokyo, Amsterdam, Torino, Milan, San Francisco, Atlanta, Philadelphia and Cleveland.

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