



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ANNOUNCES CASTING UPDATE FOR
GOUNOD'S *ROMEO AND JULIET*, OPENING ON SEPTEMBER 6**

**TENOR PENE PATI TO SING THE ROLE OF ROMEO IN ALL PERFORMANCES,
REPLACING BRYAN HYMEL, WHO HAS WITHDRAWN FROM THE PRODUCTION**



Pene Pati

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (September 3, 2019) — San Francisco Opera today announced a cast change for Charles Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* (*Roméo et Juliette*), which opens the Company's 97th season on September 6, 2019 and runs for seven performances through October 1 at the War Memorial Opera House. Samoan-born New Zealand tenor Pene Pati, originally scheduled to sing Romeo on October 1, will sing the role in all performances, replacing Bryan Hymel who has withdrawn for personal reasons.

Pati makes his role debut as Romeo, one of the great lyric roles of the French repertory, opposite 2017 Richard Tucker Award-winning soprano Nadine Sierra (who adds Juliet to her gallery of San Francisco Opera heroines, which includes the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* and the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*). As previously scheduled, for the final performance on October 1 the role of Juliet will be performed by Egyptian-born New Zealand soprano Amina Edris, marking a rare instance when a husband-wife duo (Pati and Edris) will perform opposite each other in the title roles. The three artists, all making role debuts with this production, are alumni of the Merola Opera Program (Pati

2013; Sierra 2010; Edris 2015) and San Francisco Opera 's Adler Fellowship Program (Pati 2016, 2017; Sierra 2011, 2012; Edris 2016, 2017).

Pene Pati most recently sang the Duke of Mantua in the Company's 2017 *Rigoletto* while still an Adler Fellow. Since graduating from the program, he has joined New Zealand's Festival Opera for a new production of *Madama Butterfly*, appeared as Alfredo (*La Traviata*) for Opera San José and made his role debut as Nemorino (*L'Elisir d'Amore*) for New Zealand Opera. Last season, he made his European operatic debut as Percy (*Anna Bolena*) at Opéra National de Bordeaux. Future plans include house debuts for Washington National Opera, Berlin State Opera and Vienna State Opera. Since 2012, Pati has also been a member of Sol3 Mio, a popular trio formed together with his tenor brother and baritone cousin. San Francisco Opera presented the group in concert at the War Memorial Opera House in 2017. Sol3 Mio's first album, released on Decca Classics, achieved 8x platinum sales in New Zealand and they continue to perform together as solo schedules permit.

The curtain rises on San Francisco Opera's 2019–20 Season with Charles Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*, a French operatic adaptation of William Shakespeare's classic love story. Gounod's sensuous lyric drama returns to the Company's repertory, after a 32-year absence, under the baton of French-Canadian conductor Yves Abel. Making his American directorial debut, Opéra de Monte-Carlo Director Jean-Louis Grinda brings his colorful staging evoking the Verona of the original play. The cast also features baritones Lucas Meachem (Mercutio) and Timothy Mix (Capulet), bass James Creswell (Friar Lawrence), tenor Daniel Montenegro (Tybalt), bass-baritone Philip Skinner (Duke of Verona), and mezzo-sopranos Stephanie Lauricella (Stéphano) and Eve Gigliotti (Gertude).

Sung in French with English supertitles, the performances of *Romeo and Juliet* are scheduled for September 6 (8 p.m.), Sep. 13 (7:30 p.m.), Sep. 18 (7:30 p.m.), Sep. 21 (7:30 p.m.), Sep. 24 (7:30 p.m.), Sep. 29 (2 p.m.); and October 1 (7:30 p.m.), 2019.

On September 21, San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Giants present *Opera at the Ballpark*, a free simulcast of *Romeo and Juliet* transmitted in high definition live from the stage of the War Memorial Opera House to the new Mitsubishi Electronic Diamond Vision Board at Oracle Park.

For tickets and more information, visit sfopera.com or call the box office at (415) 864-3330.

For photographs of Pene Pati and the cast of *Romeo and Juliet*, visit sfopera.com/press or contact:

Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / jinouye@sfopera.com

Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / jmcmillan@sfopera.com

Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / tconcepcion@sfopera.com

Allison Griner (415) 565-6474 / agriner@sfopera.com