



## SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

NEW *NORTH STAGE DOOR* PODCAST EPISODE EXPLORES THE MUSIC AND THEMES OF LOVE AND LIBERATION IN BEETHOVEN'S *FIDELIO*

Guests Include Matthew Ozawa, Janet Napolitano, Ian Robertson, San Francisco Opera Orchestra Musicians and Individuals from San Quentin State Prison

Available now at [sfopera.com/northstagedoor](https://sfopera.com/northstagedoor)



The Prisoners Chorus in *Fidelio*, 2005 (Photo: Terrence McCarthy); Janet Napolitano; Matthew Ozawa

San Francisco, CA (October 1, 2021) — With its new production of *Fidelio* scheduled to open October 14, San Francisco Opera releases a new episode of its podcast, *North Stage Door*, featuring stories centered around Ludwig van Beethoven's masterpiece. *Fidelio* director Matthew Ozawa, former US Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, San Francisco Opera Chorus Director Ian Robertson, participants in the Prison Arts Project at San Quentin State Prison and other guests discuss Beethoven's music and the themes of love and liberation in the composer's only opera.

Along with its *Fidelio* story segments, Episode 3 also provides listeners with access to San Francisco Opera's backstage and orchestra pit through insightful conversations with personnel behind the scenes. The Company's Managing Director of Production Jennifer Good and production department members Chris Davis and Chris Largent discuss how the magic of opera is made and recall situations where unforeseen challenges

demanded creative, on-the-spot solutions. *North Stage Door* then delves into the orchestra pit to speak with percussionist Patti Niemi and bassoonist Rufus Olivier about their experiences as members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

Episode 3 of *North Stage Door* is now available for free at [sfopera.com/northstagedoor](https://sfopera.com/northstagedoor), Apple Podcasts, Spotify and wherever you get your podcasts.

*North Stage Door* host Chris Largent leads listeners through the episode:

- Introduction—Thomas Tongpalan, who is currently incarcerated in San Quentin State Prison, discusses the synopsis he wrote for *Fidelio* in a class for the Prison Arts Project.
- Igniting Change—Jodi Gage facilitates a conversation between *Fidelio* director Matthew Ozawa and Janet Napolitano, a former US Attorney and Attorney General for the state of Arizona, who has also served as Arizona's governor, Secretary of Homeland Security and University of California President. They discuss *Fidelio*, political incarceration, Beethoven and the power of operatic storytelling.
- Adventures in Live Opera—Production department representatives Jennifer Good, Chris Davis and Chris Largent discuss the magic makers behind the curtain and the troubleshooting skills that are often called upon in the moment. Audiences rarely see the heroic backstage saves—and that is just how this team likes it.
- Voices from San Quentin—Katherine Baltrush Little introduces a collage of perspectives on the impact of bringing arts programs to correctional facilities in conversation with Lt. Samuel Robinson (San Quentin Public Information Officer and on-air collaborator for the popular *Ear Hustle* podcast), Carol Newborg (program manager for the San Quentin Arts in Corrections), and three individuals—Kevin Sawyer, Thomas Tongpalan and Darren Rhinehardt—who are currently incarcerated at San Quentin State Prison.
- Maestro Ian Robertson on *The Prisoner's Chorus*—Jeffery McMillan interviews beloved San Francisco Opera Chorus Director Ian Robertson about Beethoven and *The Prisoners' Chorus* in *Fidelio*.
- Welcome to the Pit!—Patti Niemi (Percussionist) and Rufus Olivier (Principal Bassoon) discuss what it's like to be a member of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra with producer Michael Bragg.

*North Stage Door* was launched in April 2021 as part of San Francisco Opera's new digital initiatives, which also include the *In Song* video portrait series and *Atrium Sessions*, which

showcases miniature masterpieces. The inaugural episode of *North Stage Door* offers a look inside *The Barber of Seville* and voices include baritone Lucas Meachem, soprano Patricia Racette, Academy Award-winning director and Pixar Chief Creative Officer Pete Docter, Chairman of the Chuck Jones Center for Creativity Craig Kausen and members of *The Barber of Seville* creative and production teams. The second episode, released in July, explores the Company's new Mozart-Da Ponte Trilogy with guests including director Michael Cavanagh, soprano Nicole Heaston, bass-baritone Michael Sumuel and author Daniel Handler. All *North Stage Door* episodes are free and can be accessed at [sfopera.com/online](http://sfopera.com/online), Apple Podcasts, Spotify and other podcast hubs.

####

*North Stage Door* is a production of San Francisco Opera

Hosted by Chris Largent

Production Team for *North Stage Door*: Katherine Baltrush Little, Michael Bragg, Chris Davis, Jodi Gage, Jeffery McMillan, Jeremy Patfield, Barbara Rominski, Celine Strouts and Kali Wilson

The podcast was developed with help from Marisa Brink, Trey Costerisan and Troy Smith  
Sound Designer and Audio Engineer: Tod Nixon

Coordinating Producer: Rachel Garoon

Consulting Producer: Elena Park/Lumahai Productions

Executive Producers: Molly McBride and San Francisco Opera Managing Director:

Production Jennifer Good

---

*North Stage Door* is made possible, in part, by the Creative Edge Fund with major support from Carol and Dixon Doll & Peter Fenton and Kate Greer.

San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by The Dolby Family, Carol and Dixon Doll, Bertie Bialek Elliott, Peter Fenton and Kate Greer, 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

Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera.

San Francisco Opera is supported, in part, by a grant from Grants for the Arts.



OFFICIAL AIRLINE



OFFICIAL WINE SPONSOR



#####

PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable photographs for *North Stage Door* are available at [pressphotos.sfopera.com](http://pressphotos.sfopera.com).

For further press information, please contact San Francisco Opera Communications:

Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / [jinouye@sfopera.com](mailto:jinouye@sfopera.com)

Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / [jmcmillan@sfopera.com](mailto:jmcmillan@sfopera.com)

Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / [tconcepcion@sfopera.com](mailto:tconcepcion@sfopera.com)