



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ANNOUNCES FIVE-YEAR CONTRACT EXTENSION THROUGH 2031 WITH MUSIC DIRECTOR EUN SUN KIM



Eun Sun Kim (photos: Kim Tae-hwan; Stefan Cohen)

San Francisco, CA (October 17, 2024) — San Francisco Opera Tad and Dianne Taube General Director Matthew Shilvock today announced the contract extension of Caroline H. Hume Music Director Eun Sun Kim. With this five-year extension through the 2030–31 Season, Kim will continue to shape the musical vision of San Francisco Opera into its second century. This will include her initiative to conduct major operas by two of the art form's most important composers—Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner—each season, continuing next fall with a brand-new production of Wagner's final opera, *Parsifal*, leading to Wagner's monumental *Ring* cycle in a future season.

The fourth music director in San Francisco Opera's 102-year history, Seoul-born Eun Sun Kim began her music directorship in the fall of 2021, leading the Company's reemergence from the global pandemic and into its historic 2022–23 Centennial Season.

"This is a joyous day for San Francisco Opera as we look out to a thrilling future of music-making with Eun Sun Kim," said Matthew Shilvock. "Eun Sun is shaping our artistry in such

compelling ways, breathing exuberance, sensitivity and humanity into every score she takes on and allowing us to hear each work as though for the first time. It is a privilege to partner with Eun Sun on carrying forward the extraordinary legacy of San Francisco Opera and shaping it anew as we take the Company into its second century. Under her leadership, we feel with such awe these vast arcs of human creation. It's exciting to envision what lies ahead, particularly in her exploration of the works of Wagner."

"We work in an art form that has been told, every day for hundreds of years, that it is on the precipice of an existential crisis. And yet, opera endures," said Eun Sun Kim. "Thanks to the unwavering dedication of orchestras and choruses, artists and makers, administrators and audiences, we are able to create and share moments of collective transformation. In honor of those who believe, as I do, that the work we do matters deeply, I have accepted the offer to renew my commitment to San Francisco Opera. I am honored each day that we strive together for the highest artistic quality, and I look forward to undertaking my first *Ring* cycle here in the coming years. Every performance on the War Memorial stage builds on the storied legacy of this historic company, reaffirming our purpose and bolstering our art form for the future."

As Music Director, Kim works closely with General Director Matthew Shilvock and Managing Director: Artistic Gregory Henkel on repertoire and casting. She is a key member of the Company's creative leadership, helping to shape the artistic direction of the Company's second century. In her time as Music Director, in addition to programming the Wagner and Verdi initiative, Kim launched the Centennial Season with a star-studded gala concert and the world premiere of John Adams' newest opera, *Antony and Cleopatra*. She has overseen a number of important orchestra and music staff appointments and has brought donors and audience members closer to the musical inner workings of the Company.

San Francisco Opera Association Board Chair Barbara A. Wolfe and President Jack Calhoun stated: "On behalf of the Board of San Francisco Opera, we're thrilled that Eun Sun Kim is extending her contract through 2031. With opera projects planned 4–5 years ahead, this extension will allow the Company to continue our top-tier artistry and audience growth. We look forward to continuing Eun Sun's amazing synergy with all areas of the Opera and the integrity of the music-making she is leading. The cheers that she receives when she enters the orchestra pit reflect the incredible bond that she has built with Bay Area audiences. Eun Sun is creating something very special here, and we're so excited she is continuing."

San Francisco Opera Orchestra Committee Chair and Associate Principal Oboe Gabriel Young said: "We are proud and honored that Maestro Eun Sun Kim will continue as our Music Director into the future. Along with the refreshing clarity with which she approaches this complex and layered art form, she consistently demonstrates a depth of leadership and commitment to excellence that reverberates throughout the War Memorial Opera House. She is a thoughtful collaborator and a strong advocate for our artists, and we look forward to continuing to realize her artistic vision in the years to come."

Members of the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) of San Francisco Opera shared: "The AGMA artists of San Francisco Opera are thrilled that Eun Sun Kim and the Company are extending her contract. Maestro Kim is a beautifully collaborative singer's conductor. Her energy is palpable, her ideas are innovative and her conducting is always clear. The members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus and Ballet look forward to many more years of producing world-class art under Maestro Kim's exciting musical leadership."



Eun Sun Kim (photo: Stefan Cohen) opens San Francisco Opera's 102nd season with *Un Ballo in Maschera* and the free annual *Opera in the Park* concert (photos: Drew Altizer; Kristen Loken)

Following "a company debut of astonishing vibrancy and assurance" (*San Francisco Chronicle*) leading Dvořák's *Rusalka* in June 2019, Eun Sun Kim was appointed Music Director Designate in December 2019 in a move the *New York Times* called "pathbreaking." This month in San Francisco, Kim leads Wagner's [*Tristan and Isolde*](#) (October 19–November 5) for the first time and conducts a sold-out performance of [*Beethoven's Ninth Symphony*](#), honoring the work's 200th anniversary, on October 26.



Scenes from *Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin* (photos: San Francisco Opera/Lumahai Productions)

In connection with *Tristan and Isolde*, the Company recently released a new film by San Francisco Opera and Lumahai Productions, [Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin](#). The “absorbing and insightful” ([San Francisco Chronicle](#)) film takes viewers behind the scenes during the weeks of rehearsal leading up to the opening of Wagner’s *Lohengrin* last October. It follows Kim, the artists and production team as they meet the formidable challenges of this musical Mount Everest to deliver “radiant” ([San Francisco Chronicle](#)) performances. The film will be broadcast on KQED 9 on Friday, November 1 at 8 p.m. and is available now for free streaming at sfopera.com/digital and [YouTube](#).

EUN SUN KIM

[Eun Sun Kim](#) is the Caroline H. Hume Music Director of San Francisco Opera, where she began her tenure in 2021. With the Company, she has conducted *Rusalka*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, the world premiere of John Adams’ *Antony and Cleopatra* and new productions of *Fidelio*, *La Traviata* and *Madama Butterfly*, among others, and is currently leading an initiative to conduct major works by Verdi and Wagner each season. She is a regular guest conductor at the world’s most important opera houses, including Vienna State Opera, Munich’s Bavarian State Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, Berlin State Opera, Milan’s Teatro alla Scala and the Semperoper Dresden. On the heels of her Metropolitan Opera debut in 2021, the *New York Times* recognized her as Classical Music’s Breakout Star. Kim’s 2024–25 Season includes *Un Ballo in Maschera*, her first-ever *Tristan und Isolde* and *Idomeneo* with San Francisco Opera. She makes her much-anticipated Royal Opera House, Covent Garden debut in November leading *Tosca*, before returning to Berlin State Opera for *Simon Boccanegra*. Further appearances this season include return engagements with Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as debuts with Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

For over a century, [San Francisco Opera](#) has been synonymous with the very things the Bay Area is known for: artistic excellence and innovation, pioneering new approaches and creating impactful, reciprocal connections with community. Under the leadership of Tad and Dianne Taube General Director Matthew Shilvock and Caroline H. Hume Music Director Eun Sun Kim, San Francisco Opera is a global leader for presenting opera, training young artists and fostering repertory-expanding new works, which continues next fall with the world premiere of Huang Ruo and David Henry Hwang's *The Monkey King* and, in a later season, with the co-commission of Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek's *The Galloping Cure*. The Company's current 102nd season, which launched with Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* and the West Coast premiere of Poul Ruders' *The Handmaid's Tale*, continues with Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Mozart's *Idomeneo* and Puccini's *La Bohème*, along with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and a Pride Concert.

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PRESS PHOTOS: Images of Eun Sun Kim are available at sfopera.com/press.

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