



SAN FRANCISCO  
OPERA

*EUN SUN KIM: A JOURNEY INTO LOHENGRIN*



New film by San Francisco Opera and Lumahai Productions takes viewers behind the scenes of the Company's 2023 production of Wagner's *Lohengrin*

Broadcast on KQED 9 on Friday, November 1 at 8 p.m.



Scenes from *Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin*.

Available now for free streaming with optional English and Korean subtitles at [sfopera.com/digital](https://sfopera.com/digital) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (October 9, 2024) — San Francisco Opera announces the release of *Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin*, an hour-long film by San Francisco Opera and Lumahai Productions, the partners behind the Company's award-winning *In Song* video portrait series. Directed by Elena Park, the new film takes viewers behind the scenes during the weeks of rehearsal leading up to the opening of Wagner's *Lohengrin* at San Francisco Opera last October. It follows the production team and artists, headed by

Caroline H. Hume Music Director Eun Sun Kim, as they meet the formidable challenges of performing Wagner's musical Mount Everest. The *Lohengrin* cast features singers who are experienced with their roles, including tenor Simon O'Neill (Lohengrin) and bass Kristinn Sigmundsson (King Heinrich), collaborating with others—including Maestro Kim—who were taking on *Lohengrin* for the first time, including soprano Julie Adams (Elsa), mezzo-soprano Judit Kutasi (Ortrud) and baritone Brian Mulligan (Telramund). The film will be broadcast on KQED 9 on Friday, November 1 at 8 p.m. and is now available for streaming (with optional English and Korean subtitles) at [sfopera.com/digital](https://www.sfopera.com/digital) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).

*Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin* offers a rare glimpse into the process of mounting Wagner's monumental 1850 opera and assembling the many layers of preparation, from coaching roles and staging the opera's large choral scenes to balancing the sounds of the musicians located in the pit as well as across great distances around the Opera House. Interviews with the cast reveal frank thoughts on the challenges of performing *Lohengrin's* daunting roles; orchestra musicians describe the non-verbal, almost telepathic, communication methods that develops while rehearsing large-scale work; and music and production staff detail the military-level precision required to wrangle hundreds of artists, crew and backstage staff. Maestro Kim shares anecdotes from her early days in opera and experiences that readied her for the undertaking, while the cameras follow her collaborations with singers, instrumentalists and the production team.

San Francisco Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock said, "Opera houses are extraordinary communities of creators, working together in complete synergy across so many areas of artistic and technical focus. This film beautifully encapsulates the interconnectedness of an opera house at work, taking us into aspects of the creative process rarely seen. It is a joy to take this journey with Eun Sun Kim and to experience her unbridled devotion to producing artistry of the very highest level. She is carrying forth the tradition of excellence that has defined our company for over a hundred years, and this film give a unique glimpse into her amazing creative vision."

Director and Executive Producer Elena Park, head of Lumahai Productions, said, "With Eun Sun Kim at the center of the complexity, it was fascinating to see the puzzle pieces come together for this epic work. Our hope is that the film illuminates what it takes for her and hundreds of people to pull off something like *Lohengrin*—a remarkable feat with parallels to sports and other pursuits—and the passion and dedication of an entire company in the pursuit of something transcendent."

Film highlights include:

- A discussion about the fragile yet resilient nature of the human voice and how the cast members pace themselves to meet *Lohengrin's* endurance challenges.
- Orchestra musicians describe their technical, physical and musical challenges, the “Vulcan mind meld” bond they share in the pit and how Maestro Kim achieves a translucency of sound with an orchestra of 71 instrumentalists.
- Artists on channeling Wagnerian-scaled emotions into their performances.
- Navigating *Lohengrin's* logistical puzzles, including stage management, Chorus coordination, the hidden prompter and the trumpet players embedded throughout the Opera House for dramatic and musical effect.
- Eun Sun Kim's formative opera experiences, her collaboration with the artists and audience, and her 2019 appointment as Music Director of San Francisco Opera.

**AIRS ON KQED 9, NOVEMBER 1, 8 P.M.**

*Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin* will be broadcast by KQED 9 on Friday, November 1 at 8 p.m.

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*Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin*

A San Francisco Opera/Lumahai Productions film

Directed by Elena Park

Free and now available at [sfopera.com/digital](https://sfopera.com/digital) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)  
(option for English and Korean subtitles)

Running time: 1 hour

Director & Executive Producer: **Elena Park**

Executive Producer: **Matthew Shilvock**

Producer: **Nicole Potter**

Editor: **Steven E. Mallorca**

Cinematographer: **Mitchell Kell**

Music Audio Engineer: **Uwe Willenbacher**

Post-Production Mixing: **Bob Huott, Gintas Norvila**

Post-Production Audio Supervisor: **Oded Lev-Ari**

Livestream Camera Director: **Frank Zamacona**

FEATURING

**Eun Sun Kim**, San Francisco Opera  
**Caroline H. Hume** Music Director

San Francisco Opera Orchestra, Chorus, Crew, Company staff

*Lohengrin* cast members: **Julie Adams** (Elsa), **Judit Kutasi** (Ortrud), **Simon O'Neill** (Lohengrin), **Brian Mulligan** (Telramund), **Kristinn Sigmundsson** (King Heinrich)

San Francisco Opera Orchestra members: **Shinji Eshima** (Bass), **Rufus Olivier** (Principal Bassoon), **Kevin Rivard** (Principal Horn), **Gabriel Young** (Associate Principal Oboe)

San Francisco Opera staff members: **Darin Burnett** (Production Stage Manager), **John Churchwell** (Head of Music Staff), **John Keene** (Chorus Director), **Matthew Piatt** (*Lohengrin* Prompter; Musical Assistant to the Music Director)

This film is made possible by a generous gift from Choongja and Stephen Kahng.

Filmed at the War Memorial Opera House during rehearsals and performances of *Lohengrin* September–November 2023, with additional footage shot in the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater and Zellerbach Rehearsal Hall. Interviews with Eun Sun Kim filmed in the War Memorial Opera House and in Houston, Texas (February 2024).

San Francisco Opera's 2023 presentation of Wagner's *Lohengrin* was produced in association with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and Opera Vlaanderen. Production by David Alden (Director), Peter Relton (Associate Director), Maxine Braham (Choreographer), Paul Steinberg (Set Designer), Gideon Davey (Costume Designer), Adam Silverman (Original Lighting Designer), Simon Bennison (Revival Lighting Designer) and Tal Rosner (Projection Designer).

*Lohengrin* was made possible, in part, by Barbara A. Wolfe, Dr. and Mrs. William M. Coughran, Jerome and Thao Dodson, John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn, Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson, and Bernard and Barbro Osher.

Julie Adams, Judit Kutasi and Thomas Lehman's appearances were made possible by a gift to the Emerging Stars Fund by Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem.

#### 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 the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Semperoper

Dresden, Berlin State Opera and Milan's Teatro alla Scala. 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 the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla and the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano.

### ELENA PARK and LUMAHAI PRODUCTIONS

Filmmaker, curator and producer Elena Park has moved freely through the worlds of arts, culture and media throughout her colorful career. Lumahai Productions, her consulting and production company, embraces opportunities for artistic collaboration and social change with artists, thinkers and communities as well as institutions, large and small. With San Francisco Opera, she created the award-winning *In Song* series, tracing the roots of singers such as Jamie Barton (with Béla Fleck), J'Nai Bridges, Arturo Chacón-Cruz, Amina Edris, Daniela Mack, Pene Pati, Pretty Yende and Mei Gui Zhang performing music from tango, Samoan and Zulu on location in places such as Buenos Aires, Auckland and Piet Retief.

Director-Executive Producer credits also include *Visual Cavafy* (Taylor Mack, Julianne Moore, Carol Hancock Rux and Caroline Shaw, Onassis Foundation; screened in New York City, Athens and Alexandria); *In Focus* (Alan Gilbert and Jane Glover, Cleveland Orchestra) and *Vân-Ánh Võ* (Stanford Live). In Brooklyn, her NationalSawdust+ series explores timely issues and surprising artmaking with creators includes Jad Abumrad, Laurie Anderson, Ava DuVernay, Tiokasin Ghosthorse, esperanza spaulding and Gandini Juggling. Additional: The Met: *Live in HD* (Supervising Producer) and Saturday radio broadcasts (Executive Producer); Kennedy Center (Artistic Consultant); Cambodian Living Arts and Meyer Sound (Strategic Advisor); San Francisco Opera's BEYOND *INNOCENCE* symposium and *INSTIGATORS* (Curator); and TV/film work on *Bel Canto* and *Mozart in the Jungle*.

### ABOUT 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, innovation and community involvement. 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 repertory-expanding new works by leading composers including future commissions by Huang Ruo and David Henry Hwang (*The Monkey King*,

world premiere in fall 2025) and Missy Mazzoli (*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. For more information, visit [sfopera.com](http://sfopera.com).

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San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by Julie Dickson, Jerome & Thao Dodson, The Dolby Family, Bertie Bialek Elliott, Keith & Priscilla Geeslin, Gordon P. Getty, Louise Gund, John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn, Elizabeth B. Jamieson, in memory of Burgess Jamieson, Franklin & Catherine Johnson, Edmund W. & Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, Steven M. Menzies, Bernard & Barbro Osher, Barbara Oshman, Marieke & Jeff Rothschild, Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem, Dianne & Tad Taube, Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment Funds, Diane B. Wilsey, Barbara A. Wolfe and Anonymous.

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



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PRESS PHOTOS: Images of *Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin* are available at [sfopera.com/press](http://sfopera.com/press).

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