



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA GUILD

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD'S *AN EVENING ON THE STAGE* CELEBRATES SPEAKER EMERITA NANCY PELOSI AND PAUL PELOSI

Sold-Out Benefit Held on the War Memorial Opera House Stage



Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi and Paul Pelosi at *An Evening on the Stage* (Drew Altizer Photography)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (November 20, 2024) — San Francisco Opera Guild's *An Evening on the Stage* gala dinner celebrated the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker Emerita of the U.S. House of Representatives, and Paul Pelosi on Monday, November 18 at the War Memorial Opera House. The honorees received The Crescendo Award, bestowed by the Guild upon individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary support to the Guild and San Francisco Opera.

"Over the more than a century of the San Francisco Opera's existence, Paul and I have had the privilege of attending more than half of the opening nights to celebrate our wedding anniversary," Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi said. "We are honored to receive the Crescendo Award because Opera has always been unifying, bringing people together—and we believe the arts will save us. Our celebration of the Opera and the arts reminds us that despite whatever is happening in the world, human connection and human creativity endure."

Now in its eleventh year, the black-tie benefit presented by **San Francisco Opera Guild** offered 250 guests the opportunity to dine on the historic War Memorial Opera House stage, where since 1932 operatic legends like Luciano Pavarotti, Leontyne Price and Renée Fleming have performed. The evening's décor included set pieces from Bizet's *Carmen*. Francesca Zambello's production opened a sold-out eight-performance run on November 13 (closing December 1).

HONOREES



Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi and Paul Pelosi have long been dedicated champions of the arts in San Francisco, supporting a diverse range of local organizations. From fine art museums to theater companies and film festivals to dance companies, they are often found supporting San Francisco's world-class artistic community. This year's *An Evening on the Stage* celebrates their unwavering commitment to San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Opera Guild.

The Pelosis have not only been faithful attendees of San Francisco Opera performances but also regularly participate in events like *Opera Ball* and *An Evening on the Stage*, demonstrating their deep dedication to the arts in our community. Through their generous contributions and tireless advocacy, they have played a crucial role in ensuring that the arts continue to thrive in San Francisco.

Speaker Pelosi has actively championed arts funding at the federal level, emphasizing that a great nation must prioritize cultural development alongside other essential investments—and guided by her belief that “the arts will bring us together.” Her efforts have been instrumental in safeguarding and advancing the arts, ensuring that future generations can thrive creatively. In 2010, Speaker Pelosi received the Congressional Arts Leadership Award for her advocacy, particularly in securing funding to protect nonprofit arts jobs during the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Most recently, in 2023, she announced nearly \$1.4 million in federal grants for 57 organizations in San Francisco through the National Endowment for the Arts, including a leadership gift to San Francisco Opera for the premiere of *Omar*, a groundbreaking work by Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels.

Paul Pelosi has been a vital supporter of the arts through his service as a Trustee of the War Memorial & Performing Arts Center. In this role he has worked to uplift the cultural heart of the city as one of the world's great artistic campuses. He has been tireless in his participation in the life and health of the campus and in the resident companies: San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Ballet.

Speaker Pelosi has often shared her belief that the three most important issues facing Congress are “our children, our children, our children.” This has been her “why” in public service. When she was sworn in as Speaker and called the House to order, she said she did so, “For the Children.” This unwavering value has given her strength throughout her political career and has kept the future generations of our country at the forefront of her focus. Nancy and Paul Pelosi have directly supported San Francisco Opera Guild's music and arts education programs, providing invaluable opportunities for aspiring artists and K–12 students throughout the Greater Bay Area. They continue to support these vital programs that nurture creativity, foster academic achievement and promote personal growth for students of all backgrounds.



An Evening on the Stage co-chairs Ginny Ziegler and Olivia Decker (left and right) with San Francisco Opera Guild President Courtney Labe (center); pianist Ronny Michael Greenberg and San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow soprano Caroline Corrales; *An Evening on the Stage* guests at the War Memorial Opera House (Drew Altizer Photography)

Co-chaired by **Ginny Ziegler** and **Olivia Decker**, *An Evening on the Stage* included a cocktail reception in the War Memorial Opera House foyer, followed by dinner, musical performances, presentation of the 2024 Crescendo Award and dancing on the Opera House stage. Musical guests included current San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow soprano **Caroline Corrales** and former Adler Fellows tenor **Moisés Salazar** and pianist **Ronny Michael Greenberg** performing Pedro Elías Gutiérrez's "Alma Llanera," "Casta diva" from Bellini's *Norma*, "A Tribute to Caruso,"

"O soave fanciulla" from Puccini's *La Bohème* and "America the Beautiful." Event stylist and frequent *Opera Ball* designer J. Riccardo Benavides reunited with San Francisco Opera Guild for this event, and McCalls Catering & Events crafted a sumptuous dinner. The band Vybe Society and guitarist Freddy Clarke provided music for the dance floor.

Co-Chair **Ginny Cartwright Ziegler** remarked, "*An Evening on the Stage* is life-changing for those who experience it and for K-12 students in the Bay Area. The event blends the magic of dining on the Opera House stage, the artistry of gifted performers and the joy of sharing a passion for music and arts education. We are delighted to shine the spotlight on longtime arts advocates Nancy and Paul Pelosi. Our organization is full of gratitude for their work, and we thank all of the Guild's supporters for recognizing opera's power to give voice to potential, helping students become more confident, collaborative and compassionate."

Co-Chair **Olivia Decker** added: "*An Evening on the Stage* has become a favorite event of San Francisco Opera Guild patrons. Not only do we raise funds for the Guild's education and outreach programs for Bay Area schools and young talented opera singers, but we also honor one of our top contributors and supporters each year. This year's honorees, Nancy and Paul Pelosi, are long-standing supporters of opera and education programs for our community. I firmly believe that music unites people, inspires our spirits, heals our souls and builds a better world for all ages and nationalities."

San Francisco Opera Guild President **Courtney Labe** said, "The Guild's cherished annual event *An Evening on the Stage* helps Bay Area students experience our award-winning education programs. Through the generous community of supporters and the dedication of our teaching artists, the Guild programs foster greater cultural understanding while sparking creativity in the hearts and minds of children across the Bay Area. We are thrilled to honor Nancy and Paul Pelosi, and we thank them for being champions of the arts."

Guests at the special event included San Francisco Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock; San Francisco Opera Association President Jack Calhoun and Board Chair Barbara Wolfe; past Honorary Chair and past Honoree Diane B. Wilsey; Lieutenant Governor of the State of California Eleni Kounalakis; Chief of Protocol for San Francisco Maryam Muduroglu; President of the Board of Trustees of the San Francisco War Memorial & Performing Arts Center Tom Horn; San Francisco Opera Company Sponsor Maria Manetti Shrem; and past stage dinner honorees Carol and Dixon Doll, Pitch Johnson, John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn, Karen J. Kubin, Mary and Bill Poland, and Jake Heggie.

San Francisco Opera General Director **Matthew Shilvock** said: “Speaker and Paul Pelosi have such a passionate devotion to keeping arts at the center of this great city, and they have both uplifted the cultural fabric of San Francisco, and of the nation, in many deep and profound ways. It is very fitting that the San Francisco Opera Guild is recognizing the Pelosis at *An Evening on the Stage* this year, celebrating their vitally important championship of the arts in America.”

Tickets for *An Evening on the Stage* event were priced from \$2,500 through \$10,000. Proceeds support San Francisco Opera Guild’s innovative education programs that reach thousands of students in Greater Bay Area schools.

Previous *An Evening on the Stage* honorees include Charlotte Mailliard Shultz, Diane B. Wilsey, Gordon Getty, Franklin P. (“Pitch”) Johnson, Jr., Dianne and Tad Taube, Cynthia and John Gunn, Carol and Dixon Doll, The Littlefield Family, Frederica von Stade, Jake Heggie, Karen J. Kubin, and Mary and Bill Poland.

An Evening on the Stage is made possible through the generous support of presenting sponsor TriplePoint Capital; event sponsors Five Star Bank, Neiman Marcus and Pearson; wine sponsors Castellucci Napa Valley and Scharffenberger Cellars; and media sponsors Haute Living San Francisco and Nob Hill Gazette. Special thanks to Drew Altizer Photography, J. Riccardo Benavides, Freddy Clarke, Caroline Corrales, Ronny Michael Greenberg, McCalls Catering & Events, Moisés Salazar and Vybe Society.

ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

Founded in 1939 and this year celebrating its 85th anniversary, San Francisco Opera Guild is an opera education organization in Northern California. Its mission is—“to give voice to potential”—reinforcing the social emotional benefits of the arts for all ages in forward-thinking, philanthropic programming committed to fostering the future of opera and musical arts. San Francisco Opera Guild is responsible for some of the most prestigious events on the Bay Area’s philanthropic calendar, including partnering with San Francisco Opera on the season-opening *Opera Ball* benefit. The Guild’s education programs reach thousands of arts lovers of all ages in K–12 classrooms and after-school programs, as well as employing opera experts to share the beauty of this art form through the Opera Previews series, workshops and school outreach for children as young as kindergarten. For more information about San Francisco Opera Guild and its programming, please visit sfopera.com/Opera-Guild.

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For further press information and event photos, please visit sfopera.com/press or contact San Francisco Opera Communications:

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