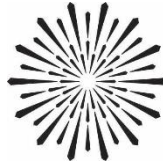


**MEROLA**  
OPERA PROGRAM



**SAN FRANCISCO**  
**OPERA CENTER**

MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM AND SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CENTER  
ANNOUNCE 2024 SCHWABACHER RECITAL SERIES

Beginning February 21, Three Recitals  
Showcase Artists in Intimate Concert Programs

Tickets available at [sfopera.com/srs](https://sfopera.com/srs) and (415) 864-3330

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (January 22, 2024) — Marking its milestone 40th year, the Schwabacher Recital Series, presented by Merola Opera Program and San Francisco Opera Center, returns this spring with a series of three recitals (February 21, March 6 and April 3) at San Francisco's Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater. The series presents emerging and esteemed artists from around the globe, performing an eclectic selection of song literature and new works in the intimacy of a recital setting,

FEBRUARY 21

SIMONA GENGA AND HYEMIN JEONG



Simona Genga, Hyemin Jeong

The series opens on February 21 with 2023 Merola Opera Program participants mezzo-soprano Simona Genga and pianist Hyemin Jeong in a program called *Two Laurels*, featuring both traditional art songs and new compositions, bringing the audience on a journey through the intimate moments of a queer love story.

Italian-Canadian mezzo-soprano Simona Genga possesses an “exceptional and rare voice” known for its “vocal plushness, amplitude and range” (Ludwig van Toronto/*Opera Canada*). A former

member of Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio, she appeared last summer with Merola Opera Program as Bianca in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* and in recital for *Metamorphosis: Recovery, Renewal and Rebirth* where she "had the audience in her grip from her first masterly measures to the last" (San Francisco Classical Voice). A recent Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition national semi-finalist, she makes debuts this season with Victoria Symphony, Orchestre Philharmonique de Choeur des Mélomanes and National Arts Centre Orchestra (Ottawa). Her latest engagements include the title role of *Carmen* (Saskatoon Opera), the world premiere of Ian Cusson's *Fantasma* (Canadian Opera Company), Handel's *Messiah* (Peterborough Singers), Olga in *Eugene Onegin* (Highlands Opera Studio) and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Brott Music Festival).

Korean collaborative pianist Hyemin Jeong has made noteworthy contributions to stages in the U.S. and South Korea and in 2022 served as a fellow pianist and coach at the Miami Music Festival. In addition to being an alumnus of the Merola Opera Program, she apprenticed at the Palm Beach Opera during the 2022–23 Season. Throughout the 2021–22 Season, Jeong left an indelible mark performing at esteemed venues such as Mixon Hall at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Merkin Hall in the Kaufman Music Center and Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall. A graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, she delivered captivating recitals at the 2022 Cleveland Art Song Festival, Encinitas' Music by the Sea and Beverly Hills' Music in the Mansion. This year she is scheduled to perform in recital with baritone Sejin Park in New York.

### MARCH 6

ARIANNA RODRIGUEZ, OLIVIA SMITH, NIKOLA PRINTZ, JONGWON HAN, YANG LIN  
Curated by Nicholas Phan



Arianna Rodriguez, Olivia Smith, Nikola Printz, Jongwon Han, Yang Lin

The second recital, on March 6, features five second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows: sopranos Arianna Rodriguez and Olivia Smith, mezzo-soprano Nikola Printz, bass-baritone Jongwon Han and pianist Yang Lin. The artists will perform in a program curated by tenor Nicholas Phan comprising of songs in English, German, Russian, Spanish, French and Korean.

Soprano Arianna Rodriguez has been praised by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for her “crystalline” performance of a duet from Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* in the 2022 Merola Grand Finale concert. As Musetta in Opera North’s *La Bohème*, she was described by the *Eagle Times* as “a delight ... a brilliant soprano delivering her wit with flair.” During her first year as an Adler Fellow, Rodriguez sang Giannetta in *L’Elisir d’Amore*, made her mainstage debut in Strauss’ *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and performed Musetta in the Company’s production of *Bohème Out of the Box*. Other recent performances include *Ask Your Mama*, a multimedia work based on poetry by Langston Hughes and originally composed by Laura Karpman for Jessye Norman, and a staged production of Bernstein’s *MASS* under the baton of Marin Alsop.

In 2023 Canadian soprano Olivia Smith she made her mainstage debut as the Voice of the Falcon in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and performed the role of Chrisann Brennan in Mason Bates and Mark Campbell’s *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*. As a participant of the 2022 Merola Opera Program, she appeared as Margarita Xirgu in scenes of Golijov’s *Ainadamar* and as Leila in an excerpt from Bizet’s *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*. During her studies at Curtis Institute of Music, Smith performed the Governess in Britten’s *The Turn of the Screw* and Marguerite in excerpts of Gounod’s *Faust* with Curtis Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Known for their “sheer stylistic range ... full-throated vocalism and raw emotional honesty” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), artistically fluid performer Nikola Printz participated in the Merola Opera Program in 2021 and 2022 and made their San Francisco Opera mainstage debut in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. This season, they returned to Opera San José for Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Festival Opera for their acclaimed portrayal of Carmen. Recent career highlights include the title roles of *Carmen* and *Dido and Aeneas* with Opera San José, *L’Italiana in Algeri* with Opera Memphis, *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* with Pocket Opera, Freschi’s *Ermelinda* with Ars Minerva, *Orfeo ed Eurydice* with West Edge Opera and *The Rape of Lucretia* with Green Mountain Opera Festival.

Korean bass-baritone Jongwon Han was a winner of the Third Prize at the 2022 Operalia World Opera Competition and a Grand Finalist in the 2021 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. Last season he made his San Francisco Opera debut as the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly* and returned as a Voice of the Nightwatchmen in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and Colline in the Company’s production of *Bohème Out of the Box*. Other season highlights include debuts with Atlanta Opera as Schaunard in *La Bohème*, Dayton Opera as the bass soloist in Handel’s *Messiah* and Palm Beach Opera as the Bonze. In the summer of 2022, Han joined Santa Fe Opera as an Apprentice Artist and made his professional debut at the Vernazza Opera Festival in Cinque Terra, Italy.

Pianist and coach Yang Lin's 2023 assignments with San Francisco Opera included *Bohème* *Out of the Box*, *Madama Butterfly*, Mason Bates and Mark Campbell's *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* and Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels' *Omar*. Last year he was awarded a scholarship to train at the prestigious Bayreuth Festival in Germany. He has served on the music staff at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, where he joined productions of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, *Tosca* and *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*. A graduate of the 2022 Merola Opera Program, he has also worked with Cincinnati Opera, Pittsburgh Festival Opera, Canadian Vocal Arts Institute, I Sing Beijing, National Center for the Performing Arts and Shanghai Theater Academy.

Described by the *Boston Globe* as "one of the world's remarkable singers," American tenor Nicholas Phan is increasingly recognized as an artist of distinction and is the curator of this recital. In addition to his work as artistic director of Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago, an organization devoted to promoting underserved repertoire, he has created programs for broadcast on WFMT and WQXR and served as guest curator for projects with the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Bravo! Vail Music Festival, Merola Opera Program and San Francisco Performances. Phan's programs often examine themes of identity, highlight unfairly underrepresented voices from history and strive to underline the relevance of music from all periods to the current of the present day.

APRIL 3,  
SAMANTHA HANKEY AND CARRIE-ANN MATHESON



Samantha Hankey, Carrie-Ann Matheson

On April 3, the final concert of this year's Schwabacher series will showcase the artistic collaboration between mezzo-soprano Samantha Hankey and pianist Carrie-Ann Matheson. Their program will feature songs by Claude Debussy, Alma Mahler, Alexander Zemlinsky, Harold Arlen, Cole Porter and Kurt Weill.

With "much elegance and youthful tone" (*Financial Times*), mezzo-soprano Samantha Hankey (Merola 2017) is increasingly lauded for her powerful stage presence. Hankey's current season marks her debuts at the Royal Opera Covent Garden, where she appears as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*.

*tutte*, Semperoper Dresden as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Detroit Opera as the Fox in *The Cunning Little Vixen* and at Lyric Opera of Kansas City in her role debut as Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Following critically acclaimed performances as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Hankey returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Stéphanie in *Roméo et Juliette*. As a recitalist, she has sung at London's Wigmore Hall and New York's Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Metropolitan Museum of Art and Alice Tully Hall.

San Francisco Opera Center and Merola Opera Program Artistic Director Carrie-Ann Matheson has a multi-faceted international career as a pianist, conductor and educator. Passionate about nurturing the next generation of opera singers and pianists, she has worked with other leading young artist programs and is currently also a member of the faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Matheson began her career at the Metropolitan Opera, where she was a tenured member of music staff, serving as assistant conductor, prompter, pianist and vocal coach. An invitation from Maestro Fabio Luisi to join his staff at Opernhaus Zürich led to the expansion of her performing career as a pianist and conductor in Europe. Especially in demand as a recital pianist, she has performed with many of the world's most renowned opera singers, including Rolando Villazón, Jonas Kaufmann, Piotr Beczala, Benjamin Bernheim, Diana Damrau, Thomas Hampson and Joyce DiDonato.

#### TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets (general seating) are \$30; a series package for all three recitals is \$75. Tickets can be purchased at the San Francisco Opera Box Office (301 Van Ness Avenue) in person, by phone at (415) 864-3330 and online at [sfopera.com/srs](https://sfopera.com/srs).

Please note: The three-recital package is available only in-person or by phone. Student rush tickets, subject to availability, are available for \$15 at each venue 30 minutes prior to each recital. (Limit of two tickets per person; valid ID is required.) Artists, programs, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change.

The Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater is a state-of-the-art performance venue utilizing the Constellation® acoustic system from Berkeley-based Meyer Sound. The Taube Atrium Theater is part of San Francisco Opera's Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera, located on the fourth floor of the Veterans Building at 401 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

To ensure flexibility for patrons, no-fee exchanges will be accepted up to two hours before performances. Patrons may donate tickets for a tax deduction until curtain time.

2024 SCHWABACHER RECITAL SERIES

Presented by San Francisco Opera Center and Merola Opera Program

All performances take place at the Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater (Veterans Building, fourth floor, 401 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco, CA 94102)

*Artists and programs subject to change.*

Wednesday, February 21, at 7:30 p.m.

Simona Genga, mezzo-soprano

Hyemin Jeong, piano

PROGRAM includes:

- "Der Knabe und das Immlin" from *Mörrike Lieder* (Hugo Wolf)
- "Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder" from *Rückert Lieder* (Gustav Mahler)
- "Traum durch die Dämmerung" from *Drei Lieder*, Op. 29 (Richard Strauss)
- "Allá Arriba, En Aquella Montaña" from *Seis canciones castellanas* (Jesús Guridi)
- "Erwartung" from *Vier Lieder*, Op. 2 (Arnold Schönberg)
- "L'assiollo canta" from *I canti della sera* (Francesco Santoliquido)
- "La chevelure" from *Chansons de Bilitis* (Claude Debussy)
- "Alba di luna sul bosco" from *I canti della sera* (Francesco Santoliquido)
- "Ne suis que grain de sable" from *Trois poèmes d'amour* (Erik Satie)
- "Liebst du um Schönheit" from *Rückert Lieder* (Gustav Mahler)
- "Schenk mir deinen goldenen Kamm" from *Vier Lieder*, Op. 2 (Arnold Schönberg)
- *The Idlers* (Danika Lorèn)
- (Denial) song from *When You Left* (Chelsea Pringle-Duchemin)
- "Dedicatoria" and "Nunca olvida" from *Poema en forma de canciones* (Joaquín Turina)
- "Absence" from *Les nuits d'été* (Hector Berlioz)
- "Tristezza crepuscolare" from *I canti della sera* (Francesco Santoliquido)
- "song 3" from *When You Left* (Chelsea Pringle-Duchemin)
- "L'incontro" from *I canti della sera* (Francesco Santoliquido)

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Wednesday, March 6, at 7:30 p.m.

Arianna Rodriguez, soprano

Olivia Smith, soprano

Nikola Printz, mezzo-soprano

Jongwon Han, bass-baritone

Yang Lin, piano

Nicholas Phan, curator

PROGRAM includes:

- "Nature, the gentlest mother" from *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson* (Aaron Copland)
  - "Silent Noon" from *The House of Life* (Ralph Vaughan Williams)
  - "Sweeter than roses" (Henry Purcell)
  - "Oh Roses for the Flush of Youth" from *Six Sorrow Songs* (Samuel Coleridge-Taylor)
  - "Erste Begegnung" from *Spanisches Liederspiel* (Robert Schumann)
  - "Smile O voluptuous cool-breathed earth" from *Terra Nostra* (Stacy Garrop)
  - "Young Love in Spring" from *Songs of the Seasons* (Margaret Bonds)
  - "Lilacs" from *12 Romances*, Op. 21 (Sergei Rachmaninoff)
  - "Le temps des lilas" (Ernest Chausson)
  - "Les lilas qui avaient fleuri" from *Clairières dans le ciel* (Lili Boulanger)
  - "Viola" (Franz Schubert)
  - "Plenivshis rozoj, solovey" (Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov)
  - "Nachtwanderer" Op. 7 from *Sechs Lieder* (Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel)
  - "신고산타령" ("Shin Gosan Song" traditional Korean folk song) (장일남)
  - "I grew a rose" (Florence Price)
  - "Ich bin dein Baum" from *Minnespiel*, Op. 101 (Robert Schumann)
  - "La rosa y el sauce" (Carlos Guastavino)
  - The Cherry Blossom Wand (Rebecca Clarke)
  - Nachtstück, D.672 (Franz Schubert)
  - "Heimliche Aufforderung" (Richard Strauss)
  - "Among the Fuchsias" from *Five Songs of Laurence Hope* (Henry Thacker Burleigh)
  - "Botschaft" from *Spanisches Liederspiel* (Robert Schumann)
  - "Fleur jetée" (Gabriel Fauré)
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Wednesday, April 3, at 7:30 p.m.

Samantha Hankey, mezzo-soprano

Carrie-Ann Matheson, piano

PROGRAM includes:

- *Les trois chansons de Bilitis* (Claude Debussy)
  - *Fünf Lieder* (Alma Mahler)
  - *Sechs Lieder auf Gedichte von Maurice Maeterlinck*, Op. 13 (Alexander Zemlinsky)
  - "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" from *The Wizard of Oz* (Harold Arlen)
  - "So in Love" from *Kiss Me, Kate* (Cole Porter)
  - "Youkali" (Kurt Weill)
  - "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" from *Roberta* (Cole Porter)
  - "Speak Low" from *One Touch of Venus* (Kurt Weill)
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## ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CENTER AND MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM

San Francisco Opera Center operates under the auspices of San Francisco Opera. The Opera Center was created in 1982 to coordinate the Company's numerous affiliate programs that provide a continuing sequence of performance and career development opportunities to gifted young professional singers and pianists. Under the guidance of San Francisco Opera Center Artistic Director Carrie-Ann Matheson and General Manager Markus Beam, the Opera Center enables young artists of major operatic potential to develop their craft through intensive training and performance.

Founded in 1977 as the San Francisco Affiliate Artists Opera Program, Adler Fellowships are salaried, performance-oriented residencies for the most advanced young artists. Each year, a select group of exceptionally talented singers and pianists from the Merola Opera Program are invited to continue their training through the Adler Fellowship, a program named after former San Francisco Opera General Director Kurt Herbert Adler.

San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows are trained in musical technique and preparation, foreign language skills, acting technique and movement, as well as financial management, leadership development, mental and emotional resilience, physical health and wellness and other skills necessary for a musical career in the twenty-first century. Adler singers are often cast in mainstage roles and leading cover assignments, while Adler pianists work closely with the San Francisco Opera music staff to help prepare mainstage operas.

The program has launched the careers of many of the artists performing on our stage and on stages around the world. Alumni of the Adler Fellowship Program include sopranos Julie Adams, Amina Edris, Elza van den Heever, Patricia Racette, Nadine Sierra, Ruth Ann Swenson and Deborah Voigt; mezzo-sopranos Daniela Mack, Zanda Švėde and Dolora Zajick; countertenor Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen; tenors Brian Jagde, David Lomeli, Amitai Pati, Pene Pati and Stuart Skelton; baritones Alfredo Daza, Mark Delavan, Joo Won Kang and Lucas Meachem; bass-baritones Philip Skinner, Philippe Sly and John Relyea; and bass Kenneth Kellogg.

Widely regarded as the foremost opera training program for aspiring singers, pianists and stage directors, the Merola Opera Program has served as a proving ground for hundreds of artists. Many Merola alumni are now among the most recognized names in the opera world.

Every summer the program offers young operatic artists the rare opportunity of studying, coaching and participating in master classes with established professionals for twelve weeks. Participants also perform in complete opera productions, concerts and recitals. Offered free of charge for all participants, the Merola Opera Program is unique in the industry in many ways. Merola was the first young artist program to provide financial support to developing artists for five years following participation.



The Merola Opera Program is a financially independent organization with a separate 501(c)3 which operates in close collaboration with the San Francisco Opera Center and San Francisco Opera.

Merola Opera Program is the lead sponsor of the Schwabacher Recital Series.

For more information on the San Francisco Opera Center, Adler Fellowship and Merola Opera Program, visit [sfopera.com](http://sfopera.com) and [merola.org](http://merola.org).

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The Schwabacher Recital Series is endowed in perpetuity by the generosity of celebrated Bay Area singer, scholar and teacher James Schwabacher and sponsored by the Merola Opera Program.

Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera. Pianos are generously provided by Piedmont Piano Company.

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To obtain further press information, including artist headshots, please visit [sfopera.com/press](http://sfopera.com/press) or contact:

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