



*SAN FRANCISCO OPERA: A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION*  
AT SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

RARELY SEEN COSTUMES AND ARTIFACTS FROM COMPANY'S FIRST  
100 YEARS ON DISPLAY AT SFO MUSEUM, HARVEY MILK TERMINAL 1



*San Francisco Opera: A Centennial Celebration* at San Francisco International Airport.  
Photo courtesy of SFO Museum.

Reservations Available for Tours Hosted by the Museum Curator and  
Opera Archivist, Visit [sfoopera.com/airport-exhibit](https://sfoopera.com/airport-exhibit)

San Francisco, CA (December 20, 2022; updated February 2023) — SFO Museum at San Francisco International Airport recently unveiled a new exhibition in connection with San Francisco Opera's centennial titled *San Francisco Opera: A Centennial Celebration*. The curated installation in the Harvey Milk Terminal 1 (located post-security in Departures Level 2) showcases the Company's first century and the art of operatic stagecraft.

The exhibition, on view through August 13, 2023, captures San Francisco Opera's rich history through a selection of costumes, stage props, set models, video and archival photographs from the collections of San Francisco Opera, the Museum of Performance + Design and the Metropolitan Opera Archives.

Costumes worn by operatic superstars who have graced San Francisco Opera's stage during the past century are the focus of the presentation. Highlights include:

- The cape and hat worn by famed Italian tenor Beniamino Gigli in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* during San Francisco Opera's inaugural 1923 season.
- Legendary Norwegian soprano Kirsten Flagstad's Brünnhilde costume from Richard Wagner's *Die Walküre* in the 1935 Company premiere of the composer's four-opera cycle, *The Ring of the Nibelung*.
- The military outfit worn by French soprano Lily Pons in Donizetti's *La Fille du Régiment* during the 1940s.
- A dress from Massenet's *Manon* worn by soprano and inaugural recipient of the Company's Opera Medal, Dorothy Kirsten.
- American soprano Leontyne Price's costume from the 1981 production of Verdi's *Aida*. An iconic interpreter of the title role, Price sang her first *Aida* with San Francisco Opera in 1957.



Costumes from *Roméo et Juliette* (inaugural 1923 season), Company's first production of *The Ring of the Nibelung* (1935) and *Aida* (1981); *Tosca* costume, set model and props from *Tosca* (various years). Photos courtesy of SFO Museum.

Additional costumes from productions of *Tosca*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Tannhäuser* and *Rigoletto* reflect the work of designers Thierry Bosquet, John Conklin, Paul Brown and Constance Hoffman.

SFO Museum's Curator of Exhibits Daniel Calderon said: "SFO Museum is delighted to feature the history of San Francisco Opera during the Company's Centennial Season. San Francisco Opera is such an important cultural and artistic institution, and their story is both local and international. With their support, along with loans from the Museum of Performance + Design and the Metropolitan Opera Archives, SFO Museum has assembled a

vibrant exhibition of costumes, photographs and artifacts that span almost a century of opera history. We know the exhibition will spur the interest of our traveling public and hope it will make new opera fans in the coming months.”

San Francisco Opera’s Director of Archives Barbara Rominski said: “Working with Daniel Calderon and the entire SFO Museum team has been rewarding on so many fronts, not least for the opportunity to share our archival collections with the airport’s enormous daily audience. Whether travelers have only a few seconds to spend with the exhibits or a long layover to really dive in, these remarkable garments and artifacts have a way of inspiring wonder at the creative possibility of this lively art form.”

*San Francisco Opera: A Centennial Celebration* is located post-security in Harvey Milk Terminal 1 (Departures Level 2) at San Francisco International Airport. The free exhibition can also be seen by all travelers using Terminal 1 or through appointment by emailing [curator@flysfo.com](mailto:curator@flysfo.com) and in monthly Museum curator/Opera archivist hosted tours. To sign up for a tour, visit [sfopera.com/airport-exhibit](https://sfopera.com/airport-exhibit). To view the Exhibition Image Gallery, visit [sfmuseum.org/exhibitions/san-francisco-opera-centennial](https://sfmuseum.org/exhibitions/san-francisco-opera-centennial).

To learn more about the history of San Francisco Opera and listen to historic performances from the Company’s first 100 years, visit *Streaming the First Century*, the Company’s free online hub for historic recordings and interviews at [sfopera.com/firstcentury](https://sfopera.com/firstcentury). For complete San Francisco Opera cast and repertory information, visit [archive.sfopera.com](https://archive.sfopera.com).

#### ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

On September 26, 1923, Gaetano Merola inaugurated his new resident company for the opera-loving metropolis of San Francisco with a performance of Puccini’s *La Bohème* at the Civic Auditorium. A century later, San Francisco Opera remains a vital and dynamic artistic institution. Its culture of innovation has led to pioneering uses of technology and repertory-expanding new works by leading composers; its audience has witnessed the American debuts of operatic legends; and its training programs have equipped generations of new artists for stages around the world. San Francisco Opera celebrates its centennial with events and activities throughout the 2022–23 Season. Learn more at [sfopera.com/100](https://sfopera.com/100).

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Innovation Program sponsorships are available. If interested in learning more or making a gift, please contact Chief Philanthropy Officer Lisa Bury at [lbury@sfoopera.com](mailto:lbury@sfoopera.com) or (415) 551-6226.

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