



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA PRESENTS VERDI'S *IL TROVATORE*
SEPTEMBER 12–OCTOBER 1



Eun Sun Kim (photo: Cody Pickens); Scenes from *Il Trovatore* (photos: Cory Weaver)

Music Director Eun Sun Kim's Multi-Season Initiative to Perform Works by Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner Each Season Begins with *Il Trovatore* Featuring an International Cast Headed by Angel Blue, Arturo Chacón-Cruz, Ekaterina Semenchuk and George Petean



Angel Blue; Arturo Chacón-Cruz; Ekaterina Semenchuk; George Petean

Tickets available at (415) 864-3330 and [sfopera.com](https://www.sfopera.com)
September 20 Performance Will Be Livestreamed

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (August 24, 2023) — The first opera of San Francisco Opera's 101st season is one of the all-time classics of the art form: Giuseppe Verdi's *Il Trovatore*. Performances begin Tuesday, September 12 at the War Memorial Opera House featuring

Caroline H. Hume Music Director Eun Sun Kim leading the San Francisco Opera Orchestra with the Opera Chorus, under the direction of Chorus Director John Keene, and an international cast headed by soprano Angel Blue, tenor Arturo Chacón-Cruz, mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Semenchuk and baritone George Petean in the acclaimed staging by Sir David McVicar, directed by Roy Rallo.

Il Trovatore marks the beginning of a new chapter in Eun Sun Kim's tenure as San Francisco Opera's music director. For the foreseeable future, she will lead the Company and its audiences through works by Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner with at least one opera by each composer every season. Kim offered a preview of this multi-season initiative in 2022 when she conducted a new production of Verdi's *La Traviata*. This traversal of the works of two of opera's most important and creative voices, each born in 1813, continues with *Il Trovatore* and Wagner's *Lohengrin*, the latter in a new-to-San Francisco production by David Alden (opening October 15).

A popular favorite in San Francisco since the days of the Gold Rush, *Il Trovatore* follows the ill-fated love triangle of the titular troubadour, Manrico, the noblewoman, Leonora, and the Count di Luna. Like few other works in the repertoire, Verdi's melodic invention propels the opera's fast-moving story across four acts with relentless energy and building momentum. The opera's dramatic situations and hit tunes, including the famous Anvil Chorus, made it one of the composer's most successful works during his lifetime and it has been emulated and lovingly parodied for more than 150 years, including in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* and the Marx Brothers' classic film *A Night at the Opera*. Today, *Il Trovatore* continues in the repertory as both an avatar for Italian opera in the popular imagination and a turbulent drama adored by artists and audiences.

Sir David McVicar's acclaimed production, first presented by San Francisco Opera in 2009, was described by the *New York Times* as a "starkly effective, boldly updated staging." A co-production with Lyric Opera of Chicago and The Metropolitan Opera, McVicar's vision for the piece, inspired by Spanish artist Goya's *The Disasters of War* series features a rotating set designed by Charles Edwards, costumes designed by Brigitte Reiffenstuel and lighting designs by Jennifer Tipton. Roy Rallo, who staged San Francisco Opera's 2023 performances of Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, directs.

Two-time Grammy Award-winning soprano Angel Blue returns to the War Memorial Opera House to portray one of Verdi's greatest heroines, Leonora, for the first time in her career. Since making her San Francisco Opera debut in 2009 as Clara in *Porgy and Bess*,

Blue has emerged as one of opera's leading soloists at Milan's Teatro alla Scala, London's Royal Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. The New York Observer said of Blue "A statuesque young woman with a gorgeous face and a luminous smile, she offers a voice of pure cream, shimmering and rich throughout her range and sheerly voluptuous from pianissimo to fortissimo."

Arturo Chacón-Cruz has performed with San Francisco Opera as the Duke of Mantua in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Rodolfo in Puccini's *La Bohème* and a concert of Verdi scenes and Zarzuela arias. Following his recent triumphs in Italy and France, including his role debut as Calaf in Puccini's *Turandot* for Opéra national du Rhin, the Mexican tenor returns to San Francisco as the heroic Manrico. Chacón-Cruz is featured in San Francisco Opera's Webby Award-winning [In Song](#) video series. The 18-minute film, *In Song: Arturo Chacón-Cruz*, showcases the tenor leading students at a Mariachi Academy and performing Italian art song and Spanish favorites "Júrame" and "Granada."

After making her San Francisco Opera debut in 2015 as Federica in Verdi's *Luisa Miller*, Ekaterina Semenchuk returned in 2016 as Amneris in *Aida*. A renowned interpreter of Verdi's works, Semenchuk has won recent plaudits for her portrayal of Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* at Milan's Teatro alla Scala and the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona and as Amneris at the Arena di Verona.

Romanian baritone George Petean makes his San Francisco Opera debut as the Count di Luna, Manrico's nemesis and rival for Leonora's affection. A distinguished interpreter of Verdi's roles for baritone, Petean has performed Germont in *La Traviata*, Ezio in *Attila*, Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Don Carlo in *La Forza del Destino*, Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* and the title roles in *Macbeth*, *Nabucco*, *Rigoletto* and *Simon Boccanegra* on the world's leading opera stages.

Completing the cast are bass Robert Pomakov as Ferrando and current San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows Edward Graves and Mikayla Sager as Ruiz and Inez, respectively.

Since its 1924 premiere as part of San Francisco Opera's second season, *Il Trovatore* has been presented in 23 of the Company's first 100 seasons. The list of operatic luminaries who have performed the work with the Company includes such stage legends as Claudia Muzio, Shirley Verrett, Giacomo Lauri-Volpi, Jussi Björling and Ettore Bastianini. Soprano Leontyne Price sang her first Leonora (1958) and tenor Luciano Pavarotti his first Manrico (1975) on the War Memorial Opera House stage. In 1986, mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick

catapulted to fame with her first performance of a leading role as Azucena in San Francisco. The late Italian soprano Renata Scotto, who passed away on August 16, 2023, portrayed Leonora with San Francisco Opera in 1975. This season's opening performance of *Il Trovatore* on September 12 is dedicated to Scotto's memory.

Sung in Italian with English supertitles, the six performances of *Il Trovatore* are scheduled for September 12 (7:30 p.m.), 17 (2 p.m.), 20 (7:30 p.m.), 23 (7:30 p.m.), 29 (7:30 p.m.); October 1 (2 p.m.), 2023.

LIVESTREAM: *Il Trovatore*, Wednesday, September 20

San Francisco Opera offers livestreams for each of its productions during the 2023–24 Season. The Wednesday, September 20 performance of *Il Trovatore* will be livestreamed at 7:30 p.m. PT. The performance will also be available to watch on demand for 48 hours beginning on Thursday, September 21 at 10 a.m. PT. Tickets for the livestream and limited on-demand viewing are \$27.50. For tickets and more information about livestreams, visit sfopera.com/digital.

POST-PERFORMANCE TALKBACK WITH EUN SUN KIM: Sunday, September 17



Eun Sun Kim at post-performance talkback. Photo: Stefan Cohen

Following the Sunday, September 17 matinee of Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, San Francisco Opera Music Director Eun Sun Kim will participate in a post-performance talkback. Ticketholders are invited to gather after the performance for a live Q&A with the conductor. Don't miss this opportunity to learn about Verdi, *Il Trovatore* and conducting from one of opera's artistic leaders.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets for *Il Trovatore* range from \$26 to \$426 and are available at the San Francisco Opera Box Office, by phone at (415) 864-3330 and online at sfopera.com.

Tickets for the September 20 livestream of *Il Trovatore* are \$27.50. For more information, visit sfopera.com/digital.

Subscriptions for the Company's 101st Season are priced from \$146 to \$3280 for Full Series (6–8 productions), \$52 to \$1,640 for Half Series (2–4 productions) and a Design Your Own (DYO) option (minimum four operas). A \$2 per-ticket facility fee is included in Balcony 1, 2 and 3 zone prices; all other zones include a \$3 per-ticket facility fee. For information about subscriber benefits and special series subscriptions, including the Student & Teacher Series offering 50% off select Full and Half Series, visit sfopera.com/subscribe.

The War Memorial Opera House is located at 301 Van Ness Avenue. Patrons are encouraged to use public transportation to attend San Francisco Opera performances. The War Memorial Opera House is within walking distance of the Civic Center BART/Muni Station and near numerous bus lines, including 5, 21, 47, 49 and F Market Street. For further public transportation information, visit bart.gov and sfmta.com.

Gifts of all sizes help create San Francisco Opera's programs and are much appreciated. To donate visit sfopera.com/donate.

All casting, programs, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change. For further information about San Francisco Opera's 2023–24 Season, visit sfopera.com.

CASTING AND CALENDAR

*San Francisco Opera Debut †Role Debut
‡Current Adler Fellow +Merola Opera Program Graduate

All performances take place at the War Memorial Opera House (301 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco), unless noted.

IL TROVATORE music by Giuseppe Verdi, libretto by Salvatore Cammarano

September 12 (7:30 p.m.), 17 (2 p.m.), 20 (7:30 p.m.), 23 (7:30 p.m.), 29 (7:30 p.m.); October 1 (2 p.m.), 2023

Opera in four acts, based on the play *El trovador* by Antonio García Gutiérrez

Co-production with San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago and Metropolitan Opera New York

Approximate running time: 2 hours, 40 minutes including one intermission

Sung in Italian with English supertitles

World Premiere:	Rome, January 19, 1853
First SFO Performance:	October 6, 1926
Most Recent:	September–October 2009

Cast:

<i>Leonora</i>	Angel Blue ♪
<i>Manrico</i>	Arturo Chacón-Cruz +
<i>Azucena</i>	Ekaterina Semenchuk
<i>Count di Luna</i>	George Petean *
<i>Ferrando</i>	Robert Pomakov
<i>Ruiz</i>	Edward Graves †♪
<i>Inez</i>	Mikayla Sager †♪
<i>An Old Roma</i>	Bojan Knezevic
<i>Messenger</i>	Kevin Gino ♪

Creative Team:

<i>Conductor</i>	Eun Sun Kim
<i>Production</i>	Sir David McVicar
<i>Revival Director</i>	Roy Rallo
<i>Set Designer</i>	Charles Edwards
<i>Costume Designer</i>	Brigitte Reiffenstuel
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Jennifer Tipton
<i>Movement Director</i>	Colm Seery
<i>Chorus Director</i>	John Keene
<i>Fight Director</i>	Dave Maier

San Francisco Opera Orchestra, San Francisco Opera Chorus and San Francisco Opera Dance Corps

Il Trovatore Talkback with Eun Sun Kim

Sunday, September 17, 2023

War Memorial Opera House

Following the Sunday, September 17 matinee of Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, San Francisco Opera Music Director Eun Sun Kim will participate in a post-performance talkback. Ticketholders are invited to gather after the performance for a live Q&A with the conductor. Don't miss this opportunity to learn about Verdi, *Il Trovatore* and conducting from one of opera's artistic leaders.

#

San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by Norby Anderson, Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson, The Dolby Family, Carol and Dixon Doll, Bertie Bialek Elliott, Peter Fenton and Kate Greer, Keith and Priscilla Geeslin, Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation for the Arts, John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn, Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson, Franklin and Catherine Johnson, Edmund W. and Jeannik

Méquet Littlefield Fund, Bernard and Barbro Osher, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem, Dianne and Tad Taube, Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment Funds, Diane B. Wilsey, Barbara A. Wolfe

Il Trovatore is made possible, in part, by Opening Week Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey. Additional support provided by Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson; John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn; Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson; Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem; and The Thomas Tilton Production Fund

In Song is made possible, in part, by the Creative Edge Fund with major support from founding funders Carol and Dixon Doll, Peter Fenton and Kate Greer, and Bob Ellis.

San Francisco Opera livestreams are made possible, in part, by George and Leslie Hume.

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



San Francisco Opera is a member of

**OPERA
AMERICA**

PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable artist headshots and production images for Verdi's *Il Trovatore* are available at sfopera.com/press.

For further press information, please contact San Francisco Opera Communications:

Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / jinouye@sfopera.com

Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / jmcmillan@sfopera.com

Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / tconcepcion@sfopera.com