



SAN FRANCISCO  
OPERA

## KAREN CHIA-LING HO WINS 2025 JAN SHREM AND MARIA MANETTI SHREM EMERGING STARS COMPETITION



Karen Chia-ling Ho

**Taiwanese soprano recognized through popular vote  
for her role debut as Mimì in Puccini's *La Bohème***



Left to right: Karen Chia-ling Ho as Mimì; with tenor Pene Pati (Rodolfo). Photos: Cory Weaver/San Francisco Opera

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (August 7, 2025) — San Francisco Opera announces Karen Chia-ling Ho as the winner of the 2024–25 Season Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Emerging Stars Competition. The Taiwanese soprano, who made her house debut creating the role of Princess Jia in the world premiere of Bright Sheng and David Henry Hwang's *Dream of the Red Chamber*, was recognized for her role debut as Mimì in this summer's presentation of Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème*.

The 2025 Emerging Star of the Year was determined by a popular vote conducted online at [sfopera.com](https://sfopera.com) from June 30 to August 1, 2025. Now in its seventh year, winners of the Emerging Stars Competition receive a \$10,000 cash prize.

Of her portrayal of Mimi, the *San Francisco Chronicle* stated: "In tenor Pene Pati and soprano Karen Chia-ling Ho, the company has an ideal pair of leads . . . Ho's shyness and fragility at her character's first entrance on Tuesday grew into real strength over the course of the opera, supported by her big, dark and beautifully controlled voice. There was real chemistry between the two, and you could believe that they'd fallen in love over a lost key only minutes after meeting."

Karen Chia-ling Ho was one of eleven artists appearing in San Francisco Opera's 2024–25 Season with support from the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Emerging Stars Fund and nominated for the competition. The 2025 nominees also included sopranos Louise Alder (*Micaëla/Carmen*), Andrea Carroll (*Musetta/La Bohème*), Brittany Renee (*Musetta/La Bohème*) and Mei Gui Zhang (*Oscar/Un Ballo in Maschera*); mezzo-sopranos Lindsay Ammann (*Serena Joy/The Handmaid's Tale*), Eve-Maud Hubeaux (title role/*Carmen*), Simone McIntosh (*Offred's Double/The Handmaid's Tale*) and Annika Schlicht (*Brangäne/Tristan und Isolde*; and tenors Evan LeRoy Johnson (*Rodolfo/La Bohème*) and Jonathan Tetelman (*Don José/Carmen*).

"I'm beyond overjoyed and truly humbled to be named this year's Emerging Star!" said Karen Chia-ling Ho. "My deepest thanks to everyone who voted for me—your support means the world. I will forever treasure my Mimi debut here with San Francisco Opera—not only because of the unforgettable production and this extraordinary company, but also because of the trust and immense support I've been so lucky to receive."

Maria Manetti Shrem said: "I am thrilled that Karen Chia-ling Ho is the 2025 recipient of the Manetti Shrem Emerging Stars Award. I am grateful that San Francisco Opera continues to recognize young talent and provide them with opportunities—like this competition, where audiences can vote for their favorite emerging artists. As philanthropist, I am delighted to support these gifted performers on their journey toward greater achievements. Karen, whose debut as Mimi is especially meaningful to me—*La Bohème* was the first opera I fell in love with at 15 in Florence—has such a captivating presence and a marvelous timbre. I wish her the very best for a long and distinguished career."

The Emerging Star of the Year award is made possible by the Emerging Stars Fund, established through a multi-year, multimillion-dollar gift from Company benefactors Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem. Their gift provides crucial support for San Francisco Opera to celebrate rising artists and engage the opera community. Past recipients of the Emerging Star of the Year award include sopranos Andriana Chuchman and Yaritza Véliz, countertenor Carlo Vistoli, tenors Arturo Chacón-Cruz and Atalla Ayan, and baritone Lucas Meachem.

## KAREN CHIA-LING HO

Karen Chia-ling Ho made her San Francisco Opera debut as Princess Jia in the 2016 world premiere of Bright Sheng and David Henry Hwang's *Dream of the Red Chamber*, a role she reprised in the Company's 2022 revival and at the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the opera's three-city tour of China in 2017. Widely acclaimed for her portrayal of Cio-Cio-San in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, this season she sang the signature role with the Florentine Opera Company, Parnassus Society and Vancouver Opera. Other recent engagements include Meretaten in *Akhnaten* and the Crowned Child in *Macbeth* at the Metropolitan Opera and the title role of *Tosca* at Hong Kong's More Than Music Festival.

Ms. Ho, a participant of the 2014 Merola Opera Program, is a winner of the Renee Fleming Award from the Eastman School of Music and holds music degrees from the Universities of TNUA and Tung-Hai in Vocal Performance, a Master of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music, and an Artist Diploma from the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati.

## MARIA MANETTI SHREM AND JAN SHREM



Maria Manetti Shrem rose to prominence through her remarkable achievements in the fashion industry, notably with Gucci and Fendi. Her late husband, Jan Shrem, enjoyed an internationally successful career in publishing before founding Clos Pegase Winery—hailed as “America's first monument to art and wine.”

In the 2010s, Maria and Jan united their philanthropic efforts to champion education, the performing and visual arts, and medical causes. Since 1985, they have been respectively devoted supporters of San Francisco Opera, later establishing four major funds to nurture opera artists. Among these, the Emerging Stars Fund has played a pivotal role in bringing some of opera's most promising talents to the stage.

In 2019, Maria was honored by the President of Italy with the title of Grand Officer of the Order of the Star of Italy. In June 2022, the City and County of San Francisco proclaimed, “June 22 Manetti Shrem

Day for Philanthropy." Maria is the recipient of the 2022 "Spirit of the Opera Award" for her unwavering dedication to San Francisco Opera. In 2023, she was awarded the UC Davis Medal in recognition of her profound legacy in the arts, having founded the Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis and recently spearheaded the creation of the first holistic art district through the Arts Renaissance Program.

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