



Museo Italo Americano's New Exhibition
BRAVO—CELEBRATING SAN FRANCISCO OPERA, ITS ITALIAN ROOTS AND LEGACY
Runs Through October 22 at Fort Mason Center

Museo Italo Americano Programs Paired with the Exhibition Include
June 1 and 3 Concerts by EOS Ensemble and Mezzo-Soprano Laura Krumm and
August 17 Lecture by San Francisco Opera Archivist Barbara Rominski



Museo Italo Americano's new *Bravo* exhibition includes interactive displays (left) and historic costumes from *Aida* (center) and *Madama Butterfly* (right). Photos by Drew Altizer Photography

San Francisco, CA (May 24, 2023) — The Museo Italo Americano celebrates the 100th anniversary of San Francisco Opera with a new exhibition: *BRAVO—Celebrating San Francisco Opera, Its Italian Roots and Legacy*. Presented in partnership with San Francisco Opera and Museum of Performance + Design, the exhibition runs through October 22, 2023 at the Museo Italo Americano located at Fort Mason Center in San Francisco.

In conjunction with the exhibit, Museo Italo Americano presents several events including two concerts featuring the EOS Ensemble and mezzo-soprano Laura Krumm on June 1 and June 3 at BATS Improv Bayfront Theatre at Fort Mason. The concerts, which will feature music from Italian operatic works by Mozart, Rossini, Verdi and others, are underwritten by Barbro and Bernard Osher. Also upcoming is an August 17 presentation, "Who's Afraid of Dusty Old Boxes?" by San Francisco Opera Director of Archives Barbara Rominski.

The first museum in the United States devoted exclusively to Italian and Italian-American art and culture, the Museo Italo Americano's new exhibition traces the history of Italian opera in San Francisco from the Gold Rush years through the establishment of San Francisco Opera in 1923 to the present. The exhibition documents the pivotal role of founder Gaetano Merola and the impact of Italian and Italian-American artists on the Company, along with the role of San Francisco's Italian community in creating the institution and fostering opera in the city.

The exhibition offers viewers the rare opportunity to see silent film footage of San Francisco Opera in the 1930s, including scenes with Maestro Merola, with costumes, headpieces, recordings, programs and historic photographs. QR codes offer musical excerpts and interviews for deeper engagement.

This early history of opera in San Francisco between the Gold Rush and the 1906 earthquake is rich and varied, with singers drawing huge crowds. Luisa Tetrazzini famously sang outdoors for an audience of over 200,000 on Christmas Eve 1910 at Lotta's Fountain at Geary and Market Street. When the Neapolitan conductor Gaetano Merola first arrived in San Francisco in 1906, he fell in love with the city, stating "If destiny wants me *not* to return to Italy, this is the place to settle down."

In 1921, he took up permanent residence in the city he called "my other Italy." By 1922, Maestro Merola created a summer season of three operas at Stanford Stadium, planting the seeds for the founding of a permanent company eventually to be known as San Francisco Opera. The Company presented its first season in the fall of 1923 at what is now the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium and later inaugurated its new home, the War Memorial Opera House in October 1932.

San Francisco Opera's 2022–23 Centennial Season continues this June with a new interpretation of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, Richard Strauss' momentous *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, composer Gabriela Lena Frank and librettist Nilo Cruz's *El último sueño de Frida y Diego (The Last Dream of Frida and Diego)* and a star-studded *100th Anniversary Concert*. For tickets and more information, visit sfopera.com. To learn more about San Francisco Opera's ongoing centennial initiatives and to discover opportunities for deep engagement with the Company's history, visit sfopera.com/100.

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FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

MUSEO ITALO AMERICANO PRESENTS

BRAVO—CELEBRATING SAN FRANCISCO OPERA, ITS ITALIAN ROOTS AND LEGACY

Museo Italo Americano (Building C, Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Boulevard, San Francisco)

The exhibit about San Francisco Opera's first century and the early history of the Italian community's impact on the art form in San Francisco runs through October 22, 2023. Museo Italo Americano is free and open Tuesdays through Fridays 12–4 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 10 a.m.–4 p.m. and Mondays by appointment. For more information, visit museoitaloamericano.org.

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MUSEO ITALO AMERICANO PRESENTS

ARIAS AND INSTRUMENTALS

BATS Improv Bayfront Theatre (Landmark Building B, Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Boulevard, San Francisco)

Thursday, June 1 at 7 p.m.

Saturday, June 3 at 1 p.m. (families with children welcome; includes musical show-and-tell)

In conjunction with *BRAVO—Celebrating San Francisco Opera, Its Italian Roots and Legacy*, Museo Italo Americano presents two concerts featuring the EOS Ensemble with mezzo-soprano Laura Krumm. The *Arias and Instrumentals* concert features chamber works and music from Italian opera by Verdi, Puccini, Rossini and others. The EOS Ensemble is directed by violinist Craig Reiss and composed of members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

Laura Krumm, mezzo-soprano

Eos Ensemble

Craig Reiss, violin

Maya Cohon, violin

Joy Fellows, viola

Thalia Moore, cello

PROGRAM (subject to change):

Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart)

"Voi che sapete" from *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart)

“Crude Furie” from *Xerxes* (Handel)

Intermezzo from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni)

String Quartet: Andantino (Verdi)

“Il Tramonto” (The Sunset) for String Quartet and Mezzo-Soprano (Respighi)

“Crisantemi” (“Chrysanthemums”) for String Quartet (Puccini)

Overture to *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini)

“Ombra mai fu” from *Xerxes* (Handel)

“Una voce poco fa” from *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini)

TICKETS: Children under 16 are free, \$40 for Museo members, \$50 for the general public
For tickets and more information, visit [museoitaloamericano/events](https://museoitaloamericano.org/events).

ABOUT MUSEO ITALO AMERICANO
(museoitaloamericano.org)

Museo Italo Americano was the first museum in the United States devoted exclusively to Italian and Italian-American art and culture. Established in 1978, the Museo Italo Americano is a non-profit institution governed by a Board of Directors. The mission of the Museo Italo Americano is twofold: to research, collect and display works of Italian and Italian-American artists and to promote educational programs for the appreciation of Italian art and culture, thereby preserving the heritage of Italian Americans for future generations. Amongst the artists in the Permanent Collection: Oronzo Abbatecola, Elio Benvenuto, Beniamino Bufano, Rinaldo Cuneo, Giorgio De Chirico, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Tina Modotti, Gottardo Piazzoni.

BRAVO—Celebrating San Francisco Opera, Its Italian Roots and Legacy is exclusively sponsored by E.L. Wiegand Foundation. It is produced in partnership with San Francisco Opera and Museum of Performance + Design. Special recognition is also given to San Francisco Public Library and Stanford University archives. Special thanks are given to San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Kip Cranna; San Francisco Opera Director of Archives Barbara Rominski; Craig Reiss, EOS Ensemble; and mezzo-soprano Laura Krumm. Both concerts are underwritten by Barbro and Bernard Osher.

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PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable photographs are available at sfopera.com/press.

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