



## NINA STEMME AWARDED SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MEDAL



Nina Stemme. Photo: Neda Navaee

## Swedish Soprano Honored in Onstage Presentation Following June 4 Opening of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*



San Francisco Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock presents Nina Stemme with the Opera Medal. Stemme as the Dyer's Wife in Strauss and Hofmannsthal's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Photos: Matthew Washburn (left); Cory Weaver (right)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (June 5, 2023) — Immediately following the June 4 opening performance of Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's fairy-tale opera *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, soprano Nina Stemme, who performed the role of the Dyer's Wife in the opera, was presented with the San Francisco Opera Medal.

In the onstage ceremony with the audience present, San Francisco Opera Tad and Dianne Taube General Director Matthew Shilvock said: "Nina, you bring the sublime into our world with a generous artistry that reverberates to the core our very souls. You have taken us on some of the most heroic journeys this stage has seen, and today is no

exception. Thank you for making this an artistic home over the last twenty years and for enriching our lives and our community. Today, we celebrate your two decades of transformational artistry on this stage and, with heartfelt gratitude from the whole San Francisco Opera family, it is a great honor to present you with the San Francisco Opera Medal."

One of the world's leading operatic artists, Nina Stemme is especially known for her excellence in the art form's most challenging roles: Wagner's Isolde, Brünnhilde, and Kundry; Puccini's Turandot and Minnie; and Strauss' Salome, Elektra and the Dyer's Wife. Her 1993 triumph at the Operalia competition and being named a finalist at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition that same year propelled the Swedish-born soprano to stardom in opera houses across Europe and the Americas. Her rapid rise was further aided by the encouragement of Swedish opera icon Birgit Nilsson. In 2018, Stemme was awarded the prestigious Birgit Nilsson Prize.



Nina Stemme at San Francisco Opera: Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (2004); Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung* in the *Ring* cycle (2011); title role of *Turandot* (2017).  
Photos: Terrence McCarthy (far left), Cory Weaver (all others)

Stemme made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2004 as Senta in Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* under the baton of then-Music Director Sir Donald Runnicles. Six years later, she took on Brünnhilde in the Company's emerging new production of Wagner's *Ring*, returning in 2011 to perform her first-ever complete *Ring* cycle, and joining the lineage of Brünnhildes who have defined the Company's first century: Kirsten Flagstad (who also debuted her full *Ring* cycle with San Francisco Opera), Astrid Varnay, Birgit Nilsson, Eva Marton, Gwyneth Jones and Hildegard Behrens. In 2017, Stemme performed Princess Turandot in Puccini's final opera on the War Memorial Opera House stage.

Stemme made her role debut as the Dyer's Wife in the centennial production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Vienna State Opera in 2019. As part of San Francisco Opera's

Centennial Season, she brings her indelible portrayal of the Dyer's Wife—the only time she has sung the role in the U.S.—to the War Memorial Opera House where Strauss' opera had its American premiere in 1959.

The San Francisco Opera Medal was inaugurated in 1970 when former General Director Kurt Herbert Adler awarded the first medal to soprano and Company prima donna Dorothy Kirsten. The Opera Medal is the Company's highest honor and has been awarded for distinguished service to San Francisco Opera. Past awardees include vocal soloists such as Samuel Ramey, Marilyn Horne, James Morris and Birgit Nilsson, former music directors Donald Runnicles and Nicola Luisotti, composer John Adams and artist David Hockney.

Performances of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* continue through June 28 and feature Sir Donald Runnicles leading the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and an international cast headed by Camilla Nylund (the Empress), Nina Stemme (Dyer's Wife), Linda Watson (the Nurse), David Butt Philip (the Emperor) and Johan Reuter (Barak) in a production by David Hockney. For tickets and information, visit [sfopera.com/frau](https://sfopera.com/frau). The June 20 performance of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* will be streamed live at 7 p.m. PT and available to watch on demand for 48 hours beginning on Wednesday, June 21 at 10 a.m. PT. For livestream tickets and information, visit [sfopera.com/digital/livestream](https://sfopera.com/digital/livestream).

San Francisco Opera's 2022–23 Centennial Season concludes this summer with a new interpretation of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* (through July 1); Richard Strauss' momentous *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (through June 28); composer Gabriela Lena Frank and librettist Nilo Cruz's *El último sueño de Frida y Diego* (*The Last Dream of Frida and Diego*), a San Francisco Opera co-commission (June 13 through 30); and a star-studded *100th Anniversary Concert* on June 16. To learn more about San Francisco Opera's ongoing centennial celebrations and to discover opportunities for deep engagement with the Company's history, visit [sfopera.com/100](https://sfopera.com/100).

# # # #

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, Steven M. Menzies, Bernard and Barbro Osher, Jan Shrem and Maria

Manetti Shrem, Dianne and Tad Taube, Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment Funds, Diane B. Wilsey, and Barbara A. Wolfe.

*Die Frau ohne Schatten* is made possible, in part, by Barbara A. Wolfe, Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson, Louise Gund, Bernard and Barbro Osher, and Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem.

The Taube Media Suite is made possible in part by Dianne and Tad Taube and John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn.

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

Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera.

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



San Francisco Opera is a member of

**OPERA  
AMERICA**

For further press information, including photographs of Nina Stemme receiving the San Francisco Opera Medal and archival photos of her roles with San Francisco Opera since 2004, please visit [pressphotos.sfopera.com](http://pressphotos.sfopera.com).

San Francisco Opera Communications:

Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / [jinouye@sfopera.com](mailto:jinouye@sfopera.com)

Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / [jmcmillan@sfopera.com](mailto:jmcmillan@sfopera.com)

Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / [tconcepcion@sfopera.com](mailto:tconcepcion@sfopera.com)