



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CENTER AND MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM
ANNOUNCE 2023 SCHWABACHER RECITAL SERIES

Opening on March 1, Four Recitals Showcase Rising Artists in Intimate
Musical Programs

Tickets available at sfopera.com/srs and (415) 864-3330

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (February 2, 2023) — Now in its 39th year, the Schwabacher Recital Series, presented by San Francisco Opera Center and the Merola Opera Program, returns this spring with a series of four recitals (March 1, March 22, April 12 and May 18) at San Francisco's Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater and San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Barbro Osher Recital Hall. The series presents emerging and esteemed artists from around the globe, performing an eclectic selection of song literature and new works in the intimacy of a recital setting,

MARCH 1, TAUBE ATRIUM THEATER
MEIGUI ZHANG AND JOHN CHURCHWELL



Meigui Zhang, John Churchwell

The series opens on March 1 with a program focusing on songs in German, French and Chinese. Two Merola alumni will share the stage: soprano Meigui Zhang (2018) and pianist John Churchwell (1996). They are also both graduates of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

Meigui Zhang made her San Francisco Opera debut in Summer 2022 as Dai Yu in Bright Sheng and David Henry Hwang's *Dream of the Red Chamber* and returned last November in another role

debut in Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, garnering praise from *Opera News* as a "touchingly expressive, plush-voiced Eurydice." The Chinese soprano is also the subject of an episode of the Company's award-winning video portrait series, [In Song](#). As a Merola participant, she performed the role of Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*. Her Metropolitan Opera appearances include roles in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Verdi's *Macbeth* and *Don Carlos*.

San Francisco Opera's Head of Music Staff John Churchwell was recently appointed co-director, with mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke, of the Lehrer Vocal Institute at Santa Barbara's Music Academy of the West. He has assisted on more than 140 productions and collaborated with the world's leading conductors, including Eun Sun Kim, Nicola Luisotti, Donald Runnicles, James Conlon, Marco Armiliato and Fabio Luisi and was an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera. He has collaborated in recital with many acclaimed artists, notably Renée Fleming, Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, Lawrence Brownlee, Lisette Oropesa, Isabel Leonard and Michael Fabiano.

MARCH 22, TAUBE ATRIUM THEATER
MIKAYLA SAGER, GABRIELLE BETEAG,
VICTOR CARDAMONE, EDWARD GRAVES AND MARIKA YASUDA
Curated by Nicholas Phan



Mikayla Sager, Gabrielle Beteag, Victor Cardamone, Edward Graves, Marika Yasuda

The second 2022 Schwabacher recital, on March 22, features five second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows and Merola alumni: soprano Mikayla Sager, mezzo-soprano Gabrielle Beteag, tenors Victor Cardamone and Edward Graves and pianist Marika Yasuda. The artists will perform rarely heard musical selections in a program curated by tenor Nicholas Phan that spans from Brahms, Schumann and Monteverdi to Pauline Viardot, Nora Holt and Ruth Crawford Seeger.

Canadian soprano Mikayla Sager first appeared with the Company in the *Eun Sun Kim Conducts Verdi* concert last summer and returned to the War Memorial Opera House stage in October as Sister Felicity in Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. She was awarded the 2022 Maria Manetti Shrem Prize at Festival Napa Valley, where she performed the role of Giannetta in Donizetti's

L'Elisir d'Amore. This spring, Sager will share the role of Mimi in San Francisco Opera's upcoming touring production of [Bohème Out of the Box](#).

Mezzo-soprano Gabrielle Beteag first bowed with San Francisco Opera in Bright Sheng and David Henry Hwang's *Dream of the Red Chamber* in 2022. During the Company's Centennial Season, Beteag created the role of Iras in the world premiere of John Adams' *Antony and Cleopatra* and made her role debut as Sister Gertrude in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Prior to the Adler Fellowship Program, Beteag was a Studio Player at Atlanta Opera and in 2020, was a Grand Finals Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

As a first-year Adler Fellow in 2022, tenor Victor Cardamone made his San Francisco Opera debut in *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Beginning next month, he shares the role of Rodolfo with Edward Graves in San Francisco Opera's [Bohème Out of the Box](#). He has also performed with Cincinnati Opera, Opera Columbus, Wolf Trap Opera and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. He has been a member of Opera Fusion: New Works and participated in the first workshops/studio recordings for Matthew Aucoin's *Eurydice*, Scott Davenport Richards' *Blind Injustice* and Kevin Puts' *The Hours*.

This spring, tenor Edward Graves shares the role of Rodolfo in San Francisco Opera's [Bohème Out of the Box](#) which will tour throughout the Bay Area. Graves made role debuts with the Company in *Dream of the Red Chamber* and most recently as Gastone in a new production of *La Traviata*. He created the role of Policeman 2 in Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson's *Blue* at The Glimmerglass Festival, which he reprised in Detroit Opera. Later this year he makes his Spoleto Festival USA debut as Anatol in Barber's *Vanessa*.

Pianist and vocal coach Marika Yasuda is a recent graduate of the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University where she is a doctoral candidate in Collaborative Piano. She has served on productions of *The Barber of Seville*, *La Bohème*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *West Side Story* and Mason Bates and Mark Campbell's *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*. In 2022, she was on music staff for San Francisco Opera's productions of *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *La Traviata* and later this spring will perform at [Bohème Out of the Box](#).

Nicholas Phan is a Grammy-nominated American tenor who is recognized as an opera and concert soloist and an avid recitalist. Co-founder of Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago, an organization devoted to promoting underserved repertoire, Phan is also a sought-after curator and programmer. He has created programs for Merola Opera Program, San Francisco Performances, WFMT, WQXR, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society and Bravo! Vail Music Festival. His programs often examine themes of identity, highlight unfairly underrepresented voices from

history and strive to underline the relevance of music from all periods to the currents of the present day.

APRIL 12, TAUBE ATRIUM THEATER
ARYEH NUSSBAUM COHEN AND CARRIE-ANN MATHESON



Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, Carrie-Ann Matheson

On April 12, the Schwabacher series will showcase the artistry of countertenor Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen and pianist Carrie-Ann Matheson. Their program will feature songs by Max Janowski, Erroll Garner, Maurice Ravel and George Frideric Handel, among others.

Acclaimed as a “complete artist” by *The New York Times*, Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen was a winner of the 2017 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. He joined the Merola Opera Program in 2016, was an Adler Fellow in 2018 and 2019 and made his Company debut starring as Medoro in Handel’s *Orlando*. His first commercial recording—Kevin Fuch’s *Poems of Life* with the London Symphony Orchestra—won the 2019 Grammy Award in the Best Classical Compendium category. A highly sought-after opera and concert soloist, recent and future engagements include performances with the Bavarian State Opera, Komische Oper Berlin, Glyndebourne Festival and the Metropolitan Opera.

San Francisco Opera Center Artistic Director Carrie-Ann Matheson has a multi-faceted international career as a pianist, conductor and educator. Matheson was a tenured member of the Metropolitan Opera’s full-time music staff as assistant conductor, prompter and vocal coach before joining the conducting and coaching staff at Opernhaus Zürich in 2014. Especially in demand as a recital pianist, she has collaborated with opera’s greatest luminaries, including Rolando Villazón, Jonas Kaufmann, Piotr Beczala, Benjamin Bernheim, Diana Damrau, Thomas Hampson and Joyce DiDonato.

MAY 18, SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC BARBRO OSHER RECITAL HALL
ERIN WAGNER AND SHAWN CHANG



Erin Wagner, Shawn Chang

The final Schwabacher recital highlights the deep artistic collaboration of mezzo-soprano Erin Wagner and pianist Shawn Chang. The 2022 Merola Opera Program participants designed the program, *Everything must change*, as a call to action as proclaimed through the music of Shawn Chang, Franz Schubert, Stefanie Turkewich, Viktor Ullman, Radiohead and Bernard Ighner.

During her time in Merola, Erin Wagner performed the Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* and scenes from *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Carmen* and *Ainadamar*. She is currently a member of Houston Grand Opera Studio, where her engagements include Dame Ethyl Smyth's *The Wreckers*, Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Strauss' *Salome*. Wagner has been featured in recital at Carnegie Hall, The Kaufman Center and The Kennedy Center. She returns to Aspen Music Festival as a Renée Fleming Artist, performing in Mozart's *Idomeneo* and songs by Schubert.

Taiwanese-Canadian pianist and composer Shawn Chang was named one of the 2020 Schwab Rising Stars of the Caramoor Music Festival and has accompanied winner of Young Concert Artists, tenor Daniel McGrew and winner of the Naumburg Vocal Competition, mezzo-soprano Erin Wagner. As a result of Wagner and Chang's collaboration at Carnegie Hall focused on the collective and individual experiences brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, they will return under the auspices of the Naumburg Foundation, premiering a song cycle by Errollyn Wallen. Chang has appeared frequently with pianist Steven Blier in concerts presented by the New York Festival of Song at the Kaufman Center. Chang's song cycle *Portraits of Unrelated Colors* won the commission prize of the 2022 *Sparks & Wiry Cries*. His commissioned song cycle [Us Now](#), which premiered at the January 2023 songSLAM festival, will be performed.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets (general seating) are \$30; a series package for all four recitals is \$100. Tickets can be purchased at the San Francisco Opera Box Office (301 Van Ness Avenue) in person, by phone at (415) 864-3330 and online at sfopera.com/srs.

Please note: The four-recital package is available only in-person or by phone. Student rush tickets, subject to availability, are available for \$15 at each venue 30 minutes prior to each recital. (Limit of two tickets per person; valid ID is required.) Artists, programs, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change.

The Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater is a state-of-the-art performance venue utilizing the Constellation® acoustic system from Berkeley-based Meyer Sound. The Taube Atrium Theater is part of San Francisco Opera's Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera, located on the fourth floor of the Veterans Building at 401 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

The San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Barbro Osher Recital Hall is located at 200 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

For complete information about the Company's health and safety protocols, visit sfopera.com/safetyfirst.

To ensure flexibility for patrons, no-fee exchanges will be accepted up to two hours before performances. Patrons may donate tickets for a tax deduction until curtain time.

2023 SCHWABACHER RECITAL SERIES

Presented by San Francisco Opera Center and Merola Opera Program

Artists and programs subject to change.

Wednesday, March 1, at 7:30 p.m.

Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater

Veterans Building, fourth floor, 401 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco, CA 94102

Meigui Zhang, soprano

John Churchwell, pianist

PROGRAM includes:

- Franz Schubert—Ganymed; Im Frühling; Die Forelle; Gretchen am Spinnrade
- Reynaldo Hahn—A Chlois; Fêtes galantes; Le printemps
- Alban Berg—Nacht
- Richard Strauss—Einerlei; Ich trage meine Minne
- Ding Shan De—爱人送我向日葵 - Sunflower from my lover
- Yi Zhou—钗头凤 Hairpin Phoenix
- Qing Zhu—我住长江头 I live at the source of the Yangtze River
- Eva Dell'Acqua—Villanelle

Wednesday, March 22, at 7:30 p.m.

Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater

Veterans Building, fourth floor, 401 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco, CA 94102

Mikayla Sager, soprano

Gabrielle Beteag, mezzo-soprano

Victor Cardamone, tenor

Edward Graves, tenor

Marika Yasuda, pianist

Nicholas Phan, curator

PROGRAM includes:

I. Sunset

- Samuel Barber—O Boundless, Boundless Evening
- Jake Heggie—The Sun Kept Setting from *How Well I Knew the Light*
- Clara Schumann—Die gute Nacht

II. Night's Desires

- Pauline Viardot—Madrid
- Robert Schumann—In der Nacht (*Spanisches Liederspiel* Op. 74, No. 4)
- Franz Schubert—Ständchen

III. Dreaming

- Nora Holt—The Sandman
- Cecil Cohen—Epitaph for a Poet
- Sergei Rachmaninoff—Dreams, Op. 38, No. 5
- Florence Price—Hold Fast to Dreams

IV. Things that go bump in the night

- Johannes Brahms—Walpurgisnacht, Op. 75, No. 4
- Hector Berlioz—Le spectre de la rose
- Hugo Wolf—Elfenlied
- Felix Mendelssohn—Hexenlied

V. Midnight

- Gustav Mahler—Um Mitternacht

VI. The Moon

- Claude Debussy—Clair de lune (from *Suite Bergamasque*);
Clair de lune, CD. 45, FL. 32; Fantoques
- Ruth Crawford Seeger—White Moon
- Jake Heggie—Yet Gentle Will the Griffin Be

VII. Night Terrors

- Robert Schumann—Belsatzar
- Franz Schubert—Der Doppelgänger

VIII. Sunrise

- Felix Mendelssohn—Sonntagsmorgen, Op. 77, No. 1
- William Bolcolm—Toothbrush Time

- Claudio Monteverdi—Zefiro torna
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Wednesday, April 12, at 7:30 p.m.

Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater

Veterans Building, fourth floor, 401 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco, CA 94102

Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, countertenor

Carrie-Ann Matheson, pianist

PROGRAM includes:

- Roger Quilter—*Three Shakespeare Songs* (Come Away, Death; O Mistress Mine; Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind)
 - H. Leslie Adams—Prayer from *Nightsongs*
 - Florence Price—Night; Sunset
 - Clara Schumann—Four songs from Op. 13 (Ich stand in dunklen Träumen; Sie liebten sich beide; Die Liebe saß als Nachtigall; Der Mond kommt still gegangen)
 - Max Janowski—Avinu Malkeinu
 - Maurice Ravel—Kaddish from *Deux Mélodies Hébraïques*
 - Georg Frederic Handel—from *Saul*: O Lord, Whose Mercies Numberless; Impious Wretch
 - Henri Duparc—L'Invitation au voyage; Chanson triste; Phidylé
 - Erroll Garner—Misty
 - Cole Porter—I Get a Kick Out of You
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Thursday, May 18, at 7:30 p.m.

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Barbro Osher Recital Hall

200 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102

Erin Wagner, mezzo-soprano

Shawn Chang, pianist

Everything must change program includes:

- Franz Schubert—Wehmut; Herbst; Iphigenia; Die Götter Griechenlands; Hoffnung; Frühlingsglaube
 - Shawn Chang—*Us Now* (Break Away; Falling in love with the unknown; Us Now)
 - Stefania Turkewich—Silver Song I; My Heart
 - Viktor Ullmann—*Six Sonnets de Louise Labé* (Claire Vénus; On Voit Mourir; Je Vis, Je Meurs; Luth, compagnon; Baise m'encor; Oh si j'étais)
 - Radiohead—Everything in its right place (arranged by Shawn Chang)
 - Bernard Ighner—Everything Must Change (arranged by Shawn Chang)
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ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CENTER AND MEROLA OPERA PROGRAM

San Francisco Opera Center was created in 1982 by then-General Director Terence A. McEwen to oversee the operation and administration of the education and training programs initiated by Kurt Herbert Adler in 1954. Providing a coordinated sequence of performance and study opportunities for young artists, San Francisco Opera Center represents a new era in which young artists of major operatic potential can develop through intensive training and performance, under the aegis of a major international opera company.

Under the guidance of San Francisco Opera Center Artistic Director Carrie-Ann Matheson and General Director Markus Beam, with support from San Francisco Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock, the Opera Center has trained and introduced many young stars from around the world to the international opera stage through its resident artist programs.

Initially founded as the San Francisco Opera/Affiliate Artists program in 1975, the Adler Fellowship Program is one of the nation's most prestigious performance-oriented residencies for advanced young singers and pianists. Each year, Adler Fellows are sponsored by individual donors and institutional funders to help cover the cost of their fellowship, and sponsors affiliated with the Adler Program have the opportunity to attend private studio classes with the Fellows and develop nurturing relationships with them.

Alumni from the Adler Fellowship Program include sopranos Leah Crocetto, Heidi Melton, Melody Moore, Patricia Racette, Nadine Sierra, Ruth Ann Swenson, Elza van den Heever and Deborah Voigt; mezzo-sopranos Zheng Cao, Kendall Gladen, Daniela Mack and Dolora Zajick; countertenors Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen and Gerald Thompson; tenors Brian Jagde, Sean Panikkar and Alek Shrader; baritones Eugene Brancoveanu, Alfredo Daza, Mark Delavan and Lucas Meachem; bass-baritones John Relyea, Philip Skinner and Daniel Sumegi; and basses Magnús Baldvinsson and Kenneth Kellogg.

Widely regarded as the foremost opera training program for aspiring singers, pianists and stage directors, the Merola Opera Program has served as a proving ground for hundreds of artists. Many Merola alumni are now among the most recognized names in the opera world.

Every summer the program offers young operatic artists the rare opportunity of studying, coaching and participating in master classes with established professionals for twelve weeks. Participants also perform in complete opera productions, concerts and recitals. Offered free of charge for all participants, the Merola Opera Program is unique in the industry in many ways. Merola was the first young artist program to provide financial support to developing artists for five years following participation.

The Merola Opera Program is a financially independent organization with a separate 501(c)3 which operates in close collaboration with the San Francisco Opera Center and San Francisco Opera.

Since 2015, Merola Opera Program has been the sole sponsor of three of the four annual Schwabacher Recitals.

For more information on the San Francisco Opera Center, Adler Fellowship and Merola Opera Program, visit sfopera.com and merola.org.

The Schwabacher Recital Series is endowed in perpetuity by the generosity of celebrated Bay Area singer, scholar and teacher James Schwabacher and sponsored by the Merola Opera Program.

Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera. Pianos are generously provided by Piedmont Piano Company.

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To obtain further press information, including artist headshots, please visit sfopera.com/press or 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