



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA RELEASES FOURTH INSTALLMENT OF
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION PROJECT: *STREAMING THE FIRST CENTURY*



Free Digital Hub Features Complete and Excerpted Audio from 25 Historic
San Francisco Opera Performances from the First 100 Years

New Additions Include Strauss' *Salome* (1974) and Korngold's *Die tote Stadt* (2008);
Excerpts from Wagner's *Die Walküre* (1936), Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (1960),
Strauss' *Elektra* (1966) and Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1978)

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA (December 5, 2022) — San Francisco Opera's centennial celebrations continue with the addition of a fourth installment of *Streaming the First Century*, the Company's free online hub for historic performance recordings, interviews and contemporary conversations. Session 4: "Ho-jo-to-ho," named for Brünnhilde's battle cry in Wagner's *Die Walküre*, highlights significant performances of works by German and Austrian composers from the Company's first 100 seasons.

Each *Streaming the First Century* session, beginning with the launch of Session 1 "Slavic Sensibilities" in September, has offered a curated deep dive into San Francisco Opera's repertoire with selections inspired by mainstage works from the 2022–23 Centennial Season. The first installment offered a survey of Russian and Slavic works coinciding with the presentation of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*

provided the focus on French works in Session 2 “Parlez-vous français” and Session 3 “Italian Roots” explores the Company’s foundations in the Italian repertoire in connection with the new productions of Verdi’s *La Traviata* and Gluck’s *Orpheus and Eurydice*. Session 4 “Ho-jo-to-ho” invites listeners into works by Mozart, Korngold, Wagner, Beethoven and Strauss in anticipation of the return of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in June 2023. San Francisco Opera presented the American premiere of Strauss’ fairytale opera in 1959.

Each *Streaming the First Century* installment features two complete opera recordings from the San Francisco Opera Archives along with excerpts from four additional titles of historic significance. Introductions to each listening experience are offered by a panel of contemporary voices. Original program articles, archival photographs and other content are presented to inspire different pathways into the distinguished history of San Francisco Opera, one of only three American opera companies to reach the 100-year milestone.

In addition to the 25 featured performance recordings are an array of archival interviews with artists of the past and newly captured conversations about the history of San Francisco Opera. These testimonies, in audio and transcript formats, are available in “Down the Rabbit Hole,” a section of *Streaming the First Century* that also includes additional essays and pathways for inquiry.

SESSION 4: “Ho-jo-to-ho”



Leonie Rysanek in *Salome* (1974); Torsten Kerl in *Die Tote Stadt* (2008); *Die Walküre* with Lauritz Melchior, Kirsten Flagstad and Fritz Reiner (1936). Photos: Ron Scherl; Terrence McCarthy; Lawrence Morton

Salome (1974) by Richard Strauss. Austrian diva Leonie Rysanek is Salome in one of the most entrancing performances of her long, distinguished career. This preserved San Francisco Opera broadcast, conducted by Otmar Suitner, also features legendary Wagnerian soprano Astrid Varnay as Herodias. Writer Paul Thomason introduces this

audio memento, recalling Rysanek's unique onstage presence and her special connection with audiences in San Francisco.

Die tote Stadt (2008) by Erich Wolfgang Korngold. The heart and soul of Korngold's resplendent score come to life in this 2008 performance featuring Torsten Kerl, Emily Magee and Lucas Meachem under the assured leadership of then-Music Director Sir Donald Runnicles. Writer Larry Rothe introduces this compelling work, which after decades of neglect, is being rediscovered by music lovers.

Excerpts: An only-in-San-Francisco cast of operatic legends assembled for Wagner's *Die Walküre* (1936); Kurt Herbert Adler conducts a brisk account of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (1960); Amy Shuard and Regina Resnik bring frightening intensity to Strauss' *Elektra* (1966) and Gwyneth Jones is definitive as Leonore in Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1978), a performance that also introduced Sheri Greenawald to San Francisco Opera audiences.

SESSION 3: "Italian Roots"



Ettore Bastianini and Mario Del Monaco in *Pagliacci* (1962); *Turandot* with Luciano Pavarotti (1977); Leontyne Price in *Il Trovatore* (1971). Photos: Robert Cahen; Ron Scherl; Carolyn Mason Jones

Pagliacci (1962) by Ruggero Leoncavallo with Mario Del Monaco (Canio), Ettore Bastianini (Tonio), Marilyn Horne (Nedda), Russell Christopher (Silvio); Oliviero De Fabritiis (conductor).

Turandot (1977) by Giacomo Puccini with Montserrat Caballé (Turandot), Luciano Pavarotti (Calaf), Leona Mitchell (Liù), Giorgio Tozzi (Timur); Riccardo Chailly (conductor).

Excerpts: Company founder Gaetano Merola conducts prima donna Claudia Muzio in Puccini's *Tosca* at the inaugural opening of the War Memorial Opera House (1932); tenor Beniamino Gigli brings down the house in Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* (1938); an audience

recording preserves the spectacular artistry of Leontyne Price in *Il Trovatore* (1971) and the house debut of Nicola Luisotti conducting *La Forza del Destino* (2005).

SESSION 2: "Parlez-vous français"



José Carreras in Massenet's *Werther* (1978); Samuel Ramey and Renée Fleming in Charpentier's *Louise* (1999); Bidú Sayão backstage as Manon (1939). Photos: Ron Scherl; Ken Friedman; Lawrence Morton

Werther (1978) by Jules Massenet with José Carreras (Werther), Maria Ewing (Charlotte), Kathleen Battle (Sophie), Allan Monk (Albert); Antonio de Almeida (conductor).

Louise (1999) by Gustave Charpentier with Renée Fleming (Louise), Jerry Hadley (Julien), Samuel Ramey (Father), Felicity Palmer (Mother); Patrick Summers (conductor).

Excerpts: An early opening night broadcast of Massenet's *Manon* (1939); the Company premiere of Berlioz's *Les Troyens* (1966); a star-powered performance of Massenet's *Thaïs* with Beverly Sills and Sherrill Milnes (1976) and the U.S. premiere of Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise* (2002).

SESSION 1: "Slavic Sensibilities"



Elisabeth Söderström and Sena Jurinac in Janáček's *Jenůfa* (1980); Anja Silja and Chester Ludgin in Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (1981); conductor Calvin Simmons. Photos: Ron Sherl (left, center); David Powers (right)

Jenůfa (1980) by Leoš Janáček with Elisabeth Söderström (Jenůfa), Sena Jurinac (Kostelnička), Allen Cathcart (Laca), William Lewis (Števa); Albert Rosen (conductor).

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk (1981) by Dmitri Shostakovich with Anja Silja (Katerina), William Lewis (Sergei), Chester Ludgin (Boris); Calvin Simmons (conductor).

Excerpts: The Company and bass Ezio Pinza perform Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* in Italian (1945); the U.S. premiere of Janáček's *The Makropulos Case* (1966); in his American opera debut Mstislav Rostropovich conducts Tchaikovsky's *Pikovaya Dama* (1975) and Mussorgsky's powerful *Khovanshchina* arrives at San Francisco Opera (1984).

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

Archival artist interviews, contemporary conversations with past and present San Francisco Opera personnel and essays are featured in "Down the Rabbit Hole." Interviewed artists include Leontyne Price, Sena Jurinac, Gwyneth Jones, Lotte Lehmann, Montserrat Caballé, Luciano Pavarotti and Bidú Sayão among others. "Spanning the Decades" dialogues explore San Francisco Opera history through a series of in-depth conversations about hair and make-up, directing, audio preservation, divas, the chorus, lighting design, the master builder and others.

For a full list of contributors and to get started with *Streaming the First Century*, visit sfopera.com/firstcentury.

Streaming the First Century is made possible by the Edward Paul Braby San Francisco Opera Archives and through partnerships with the American Guild of Musical Artists, the American Federation of Musicians and the individual artists involved. The Company extends its gratitude to all who support the Archives and its ongoing work to preserve and tell the Company's history. To learn more about the San Francisco Opera's Archives and performance history, visit archive.sfopera.com.

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