



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA RELEASES
STREAMING THE FIRST CENTURY: SESSION 1



Free Online Hub for Historic Recordings, Archival Interviews,
Newly Recorded Conversations and Essays Honoring
100 Years of San Francisco Opera Performances

Additional Interactive Sessions to Be Released Throughout Fall Season

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA (September 12, 2022) — As part of its centennial celebrations, San Francisco Opera today released the first installment of *Streaming the First Century*. The new online hub at sfopera.com/firstcentury provides free access to selected historic recordings from the Company's distinguished past, along with rare artist interviews, archival photographs, program articles, oral history excerpts and newly captured conversations among past and present San Francisco Opera creative luminaries.

Each interactive *Streaming the First Century* session, released one per month from September through December, includes two complete historic recordings, audio excerpts from four additional performances and introductions to each preserved audio experience by contemporary scholars, artists and Company members who add historical context and insights. The contents of the sessions, drawn from only-at-San-Francisco-Opera moments not found with similar casts on commercial recordings, are thematically

inspired by the 2022–23 Season providing deeper engagement with the Company's past presentations of Slavic, French, Italian and German repertoire. A "Down the Rabbit Hole" feature includes further avenues for exploration into the Company's history.

Streaming the First Century: Session 1 Overview

With Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* returning to the stage this month (September 25–October 14), Session 1 offers an in-depth exploration of the works of Czech and Russian composers through landmark San Francisco Opera performances.

Complete Recordings



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

JENŮFA (1980) by Leoš Janáček. This 1980 broadcast starring Swedish soprano Elisabeth Söderström in the title role and Bosnian-born diva Sena Jurinac as the stepmother was San Francisco Opera's first production of a Czech opera in the original language (the 1969 San Francisco Opera premiere was performed in English). Critic and Slavic opera expert David Shengold introduces the recording, recalling how the performance was already legendary among the standing room community in the War Memorial Opera House when he arrived in the Bay Area as a graduate student in 1981.

Cast: Elisabeth Söderström (Jenůfa), Sena Jurinac (Kostelníčka), Allen Cathcart (Laca), William Lewis (Števa); Albert Rosen (conductor), Michael Rennison (production).

LADY MACBETH OF MTSENSK (1981) by Dmitri Shostakovich. San Francisco-born maestro Calvin Simmons leads this incisive account of Shostakovich's turbulent masterwork starring German soprano Anja Silja as Katerina Ismailova. San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Kip Cranna, who joined the Company's staff a few years before this performance, recalls Simmons' inspiring musicianship and the tragedy of his passing in a

1982 boating accident. Cranna also provides a detailed listening guide to the humor, sexuality, brutality and irony within this brilliant score.

CAST: Anja Silja (Katerina), William Lewis (Sergei), Chester Ludgin (Boris), Jacque Trussel (Zinovy); Calvin Simmons (conductor), Gerald Freedman (director).

Excerpted Recordings



Ezio Pinza and the San Francisco Opera Chorus in *Boris Godunov* (1945); Marie Collier and Gregory Dempsey in *The Makropulos Case* (1966); Peter Gougaloff and Galina Vishnevskaya in *Pikovaya Dama* (1975)

BORIS GODUNOV (1945) by Modest Mussorgsky. This rare broadcast of the Company premiere, performed in Italian, stars Ezio Pinza in the title role.

THE MAKROPULOS CASE (1966) by Leoš Janáček. The U.S. premiere performance of this twentieth-century masterpiece was preserved thanks to a house recording made for the conductor, Jascha Horenstein.

PIKOVAYA DAMA (1975) by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The Company's first performance of *The Queen of Spades* in the original Russian was anchored by the eminent Soviet émigré couple, conductor Mstislav Rostropovich (in his American opera debut) and soprano Galina Vishnevskaya, with American mezzo-soprano Regina Resnik as the Countess.

KHOVANSHCHINA (1984) by Modest Mussorgsky. Tradition and modernity clash in this resplendent work, captured at the San Francisco Opera premiere with a sensational cast including Helga Dernes as Marfa, Gwynne Howell as Dosifei and Matti Salminen as Ivan Khovansky.

Archival Interviews

Sopranos Sena Jurinac and Elisabeth Söderström discuss performing Janáček's *Jenůfa* in this broadcast intermission feature from the Company's 1980 production.

Conductor Calvin Simmons and stage director Gerald Freedman discuss *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* with Richard Rodzinski whose father, conductor Artur Rodzinski, was instrumental in bringing the opera to the U.S.

Spanning the Decades Conversations

Hair and Makeup Edition: San Francisco Opera's Head of Hair and Makeup Jeanna Parham speaks with friend and mentor Stan Dufford, who held the position from 1956–1968 and has served the Company for nearly five decades.

Props Edition: Learn about the differences between props and scenery from San Francisco Opera's Master of Properties Lori Harrison in this discussion about Harrison's path to working on the stage.

Chorus Edition: Part 1 of a discussion between Kip Cranna and recently retired Ian Robertson about Robertson's 35-year tenure as San Francisco Opera's Chorus Director.

Director Edition: The first of a three-part conversation between Francesca Zambello and Kip Cranna about Zambello's historic career and beginnings with San Francisco Opera in the early 1980s. She discusses the Company's introduction of supertitles and working with esteemed directors Jean-Pierre Ponnelle and Nicholas Lehnhoff.

Additional Essay



Mattiwilda Dobbs at her 1955 San Francisco Opera debut as the Queen of Shemakha in *Le Coq d'Or* (left); backstage with her father and sister (center) and with general director Kurt Herbert Adler (right). Photos: Robert Lackenbach.

Mattiwilda Dobbs' 1955 American opera debut with San Francisco Opera was one of many historic firsts for the trailblazing soprano who would also become the first African American artist to perform leading roles with the Metropolitan Opera and several

European companies. Cultural scholar Maurice Wheeler recounts Dobbs' impactful career.

Full details of each future installment of *Streaming the First Century* will be available with the launch of each new session. A preview of upcoming releases:

RELEASED OCTOBER 10

Session 2: Parlez-vous français?

Mid-century masterpiece *Dialogues of the Carmelites* is on stage in October, providing the point of departure for this concentrated tour of French style in works by Massenet, Charpentier, Berlioz and Messiaen. Also included: the oldest San Francisco Opera-adjacent recording. Can you guess what it is?

Complete recordings: Massenet's WERTHER (1978) / Charpentier's LOUISE (1999)

Excerpts: MANON (1939); LES TROYENS (1966); THAÏS (1976); SAINT FRANÇOIS D'ASSISE (2002)

RELEASED NOVEMBER 7

Session 3: Italian Roots

November brings new San Francisco Opera productions of *La Traviata* and *Orpheus and Eurydice*, along with an opportunity to survey the Company's foundations in great Italian works by Leoncavallo, Puccini, Giordano and Verdi.

Complete recordings: Leoncavallo's PAGLIACCI (1962) / Puccini's TURANDOT (1977)

Excerpts: TOSCA (1932); ANDREA CHÉNIER (1938); IL TROVATORE (1971); LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (2005)

RELEASED DECEMBER 5

Session 4: Ho Jo To Ho!

Die Frau ohne Schatten is on the horizon for Summer 2023, so *Streaming the First Century* invites you to delve into works by German and Austrian composers in December with memorable San Francisco Opera performances of works by Strauss, Korngold, Mozart and Wagner.

Complete recordings: Strauss' SALOME (1974) / Korngold's DIE TOTE STADT (2008)

Excerpts: DIE WALKÜRE (1936); COSÌ FAN TUTTE (1960); ELEKTRA (1966); FIDELIO (1978)

Streaming the First Century is made possible by the Edward Paul Braby San Francisco Opera Archives and through partnership 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 story. To learn more about the San Francisco Opera's Archives and performance history, visit archive.sfopera.com.

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