



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA PRESENTS
THE TRAVIATA ENCOUNTER

A Night of Revelry Inside the World of One of Opera's Greatest Characters



Scenes from Act I of the new production of Verdi's *La Traviata* (Photos: Cory Weaver)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 7:30 P.M.
War Memorial Opera House (301 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (November 10, 2022) — For one night only, San Francisco Opera invites audiences to experience the romance, drama and passion of Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata* in a new and unforgettable way. *The Traviata Encounter* will immerse guests in the seductive world of the opera and one of the art form's greatest characters, Violetta Valéry, based on an actual person, Marie Duplessis, who was a courtesan in 19th-century Paris.

Attendees will enjoy a performance of the first act of director Shawna Lucey's sumptuous new staging of Verdi's 1853 masterpiece conducted by Eun Sun Kim and starring South African soprano Pretty Yende as Violetta and Chilean American tenor Jonathan Tetelman as Alfredo, followed by an immersive evening of food, drinks and dancing in the transformed Opera House.

Cozy up to the bar or explore the different lobbies of the Opera House, each inspired by one of the remaining scenes of *La Traviata*—from the proper elegance of Violetta's country garden (Act II, Scene 1) to the sinful decadence of Flora's gambling party (Act II,

Scene 2) and a raucous celebration of, and tribute to, Violetta's remarkable life (Act III)—guests will be fully immersed in the world of *The Traviata Encounter*.

"*La Traviata* is the opera that makes Julia Roberts cry in *Pretty Woman*," says Lucey. "Its story has inspired artists from Sofia Coppola to Baz Luhrmann, whose film *Moulin Rouge!* shares its DNA." Lucey's hope is that guests will feel completely transported into the lavish life of the beautiful Violetta. "We've thought out every detail from the décor to the craft cocktails, immersive games and live entertainment to make this a completely unforgettable experience. This will be the party of the year."

Kicking off the evening of festivities, the curtain will rise on the lavish salon of Violetta's Paris apartment. Act I of Shawna Lucey's stunning new production is performed in its entirety (approximately 30 minutes), with full orchestra, chorus and principal cast members and featuring the work of production designer Robert Innes Hopkins, lighting designer Michael Clark and choreographer John Heginbotham. The first act of *La Traviata* contains timeless musical moments such as the haunting prelude, the impossible-not-to-hum-along-with *brindisi* (drinking song), "Libiamo ne' lieti calici," and Violetta's sparkling tour-de-force aria about personal freedom, "Sempre libera."

Following Act I, the action moves from the auditorium to the Opera House lobbies, now transformed into iconic scenes from the rest of the story of *La Traviata*. Each interactive lobby area was created in collaboration with Blueprint Studios, Global Gourmet and the *La Traviata* creative team. Guests will become a part of Violetta's captivating world with unforgettable photo opps, interactive activities and live entertainment.

Inspired by *La Traviata*'s Act II, Scene 1, the upper levels will transport guests to a garden of Eden representing heavenly love. A string quartet will serenade blissful partygoers as they interact with a cast of acrobats, contortionists and other colorful garden creatures. The lower level, drawing inspiration from Act II, Scene 2, will tempt guests with dizzying decadence as they gallivant through Flora's gambling party among an eclectic crowd featuring the burlesque entertainment troupes Dottie's Red Hots and Present Progressive Events. The party culminates with a collective celebration and tribute to Violetta's remarkable life (cut tragically short in Act III) in the main lobby, inviting guests to dance the night away—just as Violetta would have wanted—with Wild 94.9 host DJ Jeanine Da Feen providing the beats.

San Francisco Opera's *The Traviata Encounter* takes place Saturday, November 19 from 7:30 p.m.–10 p.m. at the War Memorial Opera House (301 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco). Food and drink (including themed specialty cocktails) will be available for purchase, and all lobby experiences run concurrently after Act I until 10 p.m. Some lobby areas will feature adult content; suggested for guests 21 and older, discretion is advised. Costumes are very welcome, but kindly ensure your fabulous look will not impact other guests' enjoyment of the Act I performance in the theater!

Tickets begin at \$39 and all are priced at less than \$100 (\$39-\$99), except VIP Box-level tickets (\$189) which includes an exclusive, complimentary champagne pre-show reception. Themed drinks and bites will be available for purchase throughout lobbies. The VIP reception begins at 6 p.m., with lobbies opening to all ticket holders at 6:30 p.m. The performance begins at 7:30 p.m., and lobby experiences will continue until 10 p.m.

Tickets and more information can be found at sfopera.com/encounter.

COVID-19 safety protocols will be in effect for all indoor activities during *The Traviata Encounter*. Masks are required for all guests except when actively eating or drinking in designated areas, and all patrons must show proof of full vaccination with photo ID. For up-to-date information about San Francisco Opera's safety measures, visit sfopera.com/safetyfirst.

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For Calendar Editors

WHAT: For one night only, San Francisco Opera invites audiences to experience the romance, drama and passion of Verdi's *La Traviata* in a new and unforgettable way. *The Traviata Encounter* will immerse guests in the seductive world of Verdi's *La Traviata* and its heroine, the Parisian courtesan Violetta Valéry. Attendees will enjoy the first act of director Shawna Lucey's sumptuous new staging conducted by Eun Sun Kim and starring soprano Pretty Yende and tenor Jonathan Tetelman, followed by an immersive evening of food, drinks and dancing in a transformed Opera House. From luscious canapés and cocktails in the bucolic Garden of Eden, to gambling and decadence at Flora's party, guests will be fully immersed in the dizzying world of *The Traviata Encounter*. Recommended for audiences ages 21 and

over; some lobby areas will include adult content, discretion is advised. Costumes are very welcome, but kindly ensure your fabulous look will not impact other guests' enjoyment of the Act I performance in the theater!

TICKETS: For tickets (\$39-\$189) and more information, visit sfopera.com/encounter. Themed drinks and bites will be available for purchase.

All tickets are priced at less than \$100 (\$39-\$99), except for VIP Box-level tickets (\$189; includes an exclusive, complimentary champagne pre-show reception and access to a dedicated cash bar for the remainder of the evening). As part of the Dolby Family's *Opera for the Bay* initiative, \$10 tickets for new patrons will also be on offer, while supplies last.

WHEN: 7:30 p.m.–10 p.m., Saturday, November 19, 2022
6 p.m.: VIP reception begins
6:30 p.m.: Lobby opens to all ticket holders
7:30 p.m.: Performance of Act 1 of *La Traviata* (approximately 30 minutes) begins
8 p.m.: Party begins

WHERE: War Memorial Opera House (301 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco)

COVID-19 safety protocols will be in effect for all indoor activities during *The Traviata Encounter*. Masks are required for all guests except when actively eating or drinking in designated areas, and all patrons must show proof of full vaccination with photo ID. For up-to-date information about San Francisco Opera's safety measures, visit sfopera.com/safetyfirst.

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PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable photographs from San Francisco Opera's 2022–23 Centennial Season are available at sfopera.com/press.

For further press information, please 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