



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ANNOUNCES CASTING UPDATE FOR GIUSEPPE VERDI'S *IL TROVATORE*, OPENING SEPTEMBER 12



Mezzo-Soprano Ekaterina Semenchuk to Sing Azucena in All Performances, Replacing Anita Rachvelishvili

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (August 23, 2023) — San Francisco Opera announced today a cast change for Giuseppe Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, which opens Tuesday, September 12 and is the first opera of the Company's 101st season. Mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Semenchuk will perform the role of Azucena in all performances, replacing Anita Rachvelishvili who has withdrawn for personal reasons.

Semenchuk made her San Francisco Opera debut on the opening night of the 2015–16 Season as Federica in Verdi's *Luisa Miller*, returning the following season as Amneris in a new production of the composer's *Aida*. Her most recent appearance with the Company was as Santuzza in Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, which opened the 2018–19 season as part of a double bill with Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. The *San Francisco Chronicle* said of her Santuzza: "Semenchuk has been a vibrant presence in her two prior San Francisco appearances (*Luisa Miller* in 2015, *Aida* the following year), and to the vocal power and sheen of those performances she now added a vein of impeccably controlled wildness that contributed to the portrait of a woman on the verge of despair."

Among today's leading mezzo-sopranos, Semenchuk's portrayals of Verdi heroines, including Lady Macbeth, Amneris, Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Azucena have won acclaim at Milan's Teatro alla Scala, the Arena di Verona, the Bavarian State Opera and, in this country, with San Francisco Opera, the Metropolitan Opera and LA Opera. Semenchuk joins San Francisco Opera's international cast for *Il Trovatore*, headed by Angel Blue as Leonora, Arturo Chacón-Cruz as Manrico and George Petean as Count di Luna under the baton of San Francisco Opera's Caroline H. Hume Music Director Eun Sun Kim in the acclaimed production by Sir David McVicar.

The six performances of *Il Trovatore* are scheduled for September 12 (7:30 p.m.), 17 (2 p.m.), 20 (7:30 p.m.), 23 (7:30 p.m.), 29 (7:30 p.m.); October 1 (2 p.m.), 2023. The third performance, on September 20 at 7:30 p.m., will be available as a livestream.

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