

SAN FRANCISCO  
OPERA

## THE SPIRIT OF THE OPERA AWARD PRESENTED TO GORDON GETTY

Composer and Philanthropist Honored in Onstage Ceremony  
Following Fall Season Finale of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*



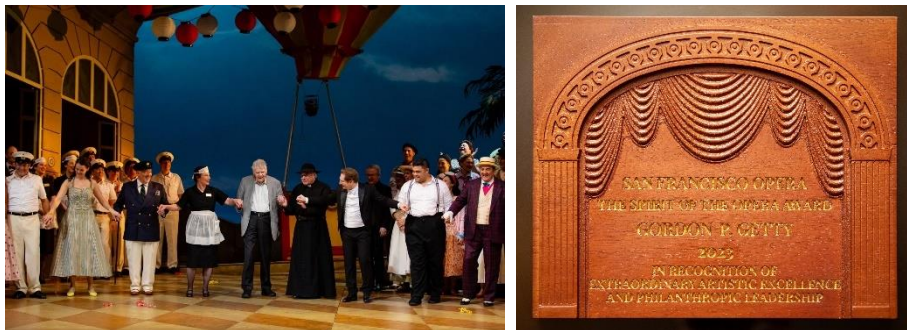
Gordon Getty onstage after the December 9, 2023 performance of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*;  
Matthew Shilvock and Gordon Getty. Photos: Reneff-Olson Productions

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (December 20, 2023) — At the conclusion of San Francisco Opera's December 9 fall season final performance of *The Elixir of Love*, the Company honored composer and philanthropist Gordon Getty in an onstage ceremony. Standing amidst the cast of Donizetti's opera, San Francisco Opera Dianne and Tad Taube General Director Matthew Shilvock presented Mr. Getty with the Company's Spirit of the Opera award in recognition of extraordinary artistic excellence and philanthropic leadership.

Shilvock said: "Gordon Getty is one of the great champions of this art form and someone who has devoted his life to the creation, enrichment and vitality of opera in America. As a composer, he brings to our stages a beautiful lyricism borne out of a profound appreciation for the human voice. As a philanthropist, Mr. Getty, along with his wife, Ann, has quietly, humbly and with monumental impact, propelled forward arts companies not only in San Francisco and Los Angeles but across America and the world. And as a humanist, he has enriched the very fabric of our society, bringing together subject matters as disparate as music, biology, economics and viticulture into a holistic worldview that leaves one in awe at the staggering embrace he has of the interconnectedness of life.

"The Spirit of the Opera Award is given in recognition of lasting and profound support of this company and so it is my great honor to present Gordon Getty with the award with the heartfelt gratitude of this house and this community for the transformational impact he has had on this company and this art form in so many ways—as a composer, philanthropist, historian and as a carrier of the torch that keeps opera vital in our lives."

Following the presentation, the performance's conductor, Ramón Tebar, led the cast, Chorus, Orchestra and audience in a celebratory rendition of "Happy Birthday" to Mr. Getty, who turns 90 this month.



Gordon Getty bows with the cast of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*; The Spirit of the Opera Award presented to Getty.  
Photos: Reneff-Olson Productions

For more than four decades, Gordon Getty and his late wife, Ann, have been stalwart supporters of San Francisco Opera. Their generosity has enabled the Company to maintain its position among the art form's leading institutions throughout the nation and world. Ann and Gordon Getty's commitment to the Company has helped bring to the War Memorial Opera House stage the world premieres of many new works, including John Adams' *Girls of the Golden West*, Bright Sheng and David Henry Hwang's *Dream of the Red Chamber*, Marco Tutino's *Two Women* and Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne* along with bolstering the core repertoire with new productions of Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*, Puccini's *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly*, among others and epochal revivals including the 2018 presentations of Wagner's *Ring* cycle.

Mr. Getty has been awarded the Gold Baton of the American Symphony Orchestra League, honored as an Outstanding American Composer at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, received the European Culture Prize and was Legacy Honoree and Artist in Residence of the Young People's Chorus of New York City. In 2020, he was named by OPERA America as one of the ten inaugural inductees for the Opera Hall of Fame, joining

Dawn Upshaw, Grace Bumbry, David Gockley, Simon Estes and other luminaries. Getty's life in music is the subject of the 2015 documentary *There Will Be Music*.



Scenes from Gordon Getty's *Usher House*, 2015. Photos: Cory Weaver/San Francisco Opera

Scenes from Getty's first opera, *Plump Jack*, had their 1984 premiere with the San Francisco Symphony under Michael Tilson Thomas. In December 2015, San Francisco Opera presented his opera *Usher House* as part of a double bill with the American premiere of Debussy's *La Chute de la Maison Usher* (reconstructed and orchestrated by Robert Orledge), as both stage works were inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's 1839 Gothic horror story, "The Fall of the House of Usher." Getty's major stage works also include *The Canterville Ghost*, which was presented by Leipzig Opera in 2015 and as part of a double bill with *Usher House* in Los Angeles and New York City, and *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, an opera which had its premiere in cinematic form in 2021 at the Mill Valley Film Festival and has since been screened by New York City Opera, Opera Philadelphia's Festival O22 and OPERA America. Getty's operas, along with his other vocal, instrumental and orchestral works, are available on the Pentatone label.

San Francisco Opera's Spirit of the Opera award was created in 1995 as a tribute to individuals whose devotion to the Company epitomizes a high level of commitment to advancing the success of San Francisco Opera and supporting the art form. Past recipients include Bob and Terri Ryan, Jeannik Méquet Littlefield, Joe Brucia, Patricia Yakutis, Diana Dollar Knowles, Harriet Quarre, Diane B. Wilsey, Maggie Wetzel, Barbara Jackson, Susan Anderson-Norby, Kary Schulman, Sylvia Lindsey, Louise Gund and Maria Manetti Shrem.

###

San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by Norby Anderson, Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson, The Dolby Family, Carol and Dixon Doll, Bertie Bialek Elliott, Peter Fenton and Kate Greer, Keith and Priscilla Geeslin, Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation for the Arts, John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn, Burgess and Elizabeth Jamieson, Franklin and Catherine Johnson, Edmund W. and Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, Bernard and

Barbro Osher, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem, Dianne and Tad Taube, Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment Funds, Diane B. Wilsey, Barbara A. Wolfe.

San Francisco Opera is supported, in part, by a grant from Grants for the Arts.



San Francisco Opera is a member of

**OPERA  
AMERICA**

PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable photos of Gordon Getty receiving The Spirit of the Opera award are available at [sfopera.com/press](http://sfopera.com/press).

For further press information, please contact San Francisco Opera Communications:

Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / [jinouye@sfopera.com](mailto:jinouye@sfopera.com)

Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / [jmcmillan@sfopera.com](mailto:jmcmillan@sfopera.com)

Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / [tconcepcion@sfopera.com](mailto:tconcepcion@sfopera.com)