

TURANDOT

Cast Biographies



Soprano **Martina Serafin** (Turandot) made her San Francisco Opera debut as the Marshallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* in 2007. Born in Vienna, she studied at the Vienna Conservatory and between 1995 and 2000 she was a member of the ensemble at Graz Opera. Guest appearances soon led her to the world's premier opera stages, including at the Vienna State Opera where she has been a regular performer since 2005. Serafin's repertoire includes the role of Lisa in *Pique Dame*, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, the title role of *Manon Lescaut*, Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*, and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. Upcoming engagements include Elsa von Brabant in *Lohengrin* at the Opéra National de Paris and Abigaille in *Nabucco* at Milan's Teatro alla Scala.



Dramatic soprano **Nina Stemme** (Turandot) made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2004 as Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and has since returned to the Company in acclaimed performances as Brünnhilde in 2010's *Die Walküre* and in 2011's Ring cycle. Since her 1989 professional debut as Cherubino in Cortona, Italy, Stemme's repertoire has included Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly*, the title role of *Manon Lescaut*, Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, the title role of Suor Angelica, Euridice in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Katerina in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Marguerite in *Faust*, Agathe in *Der Freischütz*, Marie in *Wozzeck*, the title role of *Jenůfa*, Eva in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Amelia in *Un Ballo in Machera*, Leonora in *La Forza del Destino*, and the title role of *Aida*. In fall 2016, Stemme was highly praised for her performances of Isolde in the Metropolitan Opera's new production of *Tristan und Isolde*. Upcoming engagements include Kundry in *Parsifal* and the title role of *Elektra* at Vienna State Opera, Brünnhilde at Stockholm's Kungliga Opera, and *Elektra* at Bavarian State Opera.



Tenor **Brian Jagde** (Calaf) made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2010 as Joe in *La Fanciulla del West* and returned as a Messenger in *Aida*, Janek in *The Makropulos Case*, Vitellozzo in *Lucrezia Borgia*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, Don José in *Carmen*, and Radames in *Aida*. A graduate of the 2009 Merola Opera Program and former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow, Jagde recently made house

debut at Houston Grand Opera as the Prince in *Rusalka*, Palm Beach Opera as Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and at Teatro Massimo in Palermo as Pinkerton. Jagde makes other highly anticipated role debuts this season, as Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the Royal Opera House and Froh in *Das Rheingold* in his first appearance with the New York Philharmonic. He will also perform as Pinkerton in a house debut at Washington National Opera, and he sings for the first time at Madrid's Teatro Real as Macduff in *Macbeth* and at Oper Stuttgart as Cavaradossi.



Making her San Francisco Opera debut as Liù in *Turandot*, Italian soprano **Maria Agresta** began her international career in 2011 when she sang Elena in *I Vespri Siciliani* with Gianandrea Nosedà at the Teatro Regio in Turin. Career highlights have included the title role of *Norma* for Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and in Turin, Tel Aviv, and Salerno; Mimì in *La Bohème* for Arena di Verona, Paris Opéra, Bavarian State

Opera, Teatro Regio, Teatro di San Carlo, Torre del Lago Festival, and Teatro alla Scala; Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, Liù in *Turandot*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, and Leonora in *Oberto* for La Scala; Elvira in *I Puritani* for Paris Opéra; Violetta in *La Traviata* for Covent Garden, Berlin State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, and in Salerno and Cagliari; Leonora for Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía, Valencia and in Salerno; Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra* for Rome Opera, Venice's La Fenice, Dresden Semperoper, and Berlin State Opera with Daniel Barenboim; Amalia in *I Masnadieri* for La Fenice; Julia in *La Vestale* for Dresden Semperoper; and Nedda in *Pagliacci* in Salzburg with Christian Thielemann. Prominent appearances in the 2016–17 season include Leonora and Desdemona in *Otello* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.



Soprano **Toni Marie Palmertree** (Liù) made her San Francisco Opera debut as A Heavenly Voice in 2016's production of *Don Carlo*. She is a second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and a participant of the 2015 Merola Opera Program where she was featured in the Schwabacher Summer Concert. Her many awards include the Metropolitan Opera National Council District Awards (Pittsburgh), as well as finalist in the National Opera Association Voice Competition, the Classical Singer Voice Competition, and the International Moniuszko Voice Competition in Warsaw, Poland. She took first place in the Long Leaf Opera of North Carolina Voice Competition, the Kennett Square Symphony Voice Competition, and the Marcella Sembrich competition. Operatic roles include Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Alison in *Wandering Scholar*, the High Priestess in *Aida*, Susannah in *Susannah*, Musetta and

Mimi in *La Bohème*, and Alice in *Falstaff*. She received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Maryland.



Soprano **Leah Crocetto** (Liù) most recently appeared with the Company in the title roles of *Aida* and *Luisa Miller*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, and Liù in *Turandot*. Last season, she made her New York City recital debut at Pace University with pianist Martin Katz and performed a solo recital under the auspices of Washington National Opera with pianist Mark Markham at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The former San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and Merola Opera Program alumna's other engagements in the 2015–16 season included Liù at the Metropolitan Opera, the title role of *Semiramide* with Opera National de Bordeaux, Anna in *Maometto II* with the Canadian Opera Company, and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with Santa Fe Opera. She continues to make noteworthy appearances in 2016–17: her role debut as Eleonora in the U.S. debut of Donizetti's *L'Assedio di Calais*

with the Glimmerglass Festival, Bachianas *Brasileiras* No. 5 with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center at Alice Tully Hall, and a solo recital in her hometown of Adrian, Michigan.



Bass **Raymond Aceto** (Timur) made his debut with San Francisco Opera in 1997 as Monterone in *Rigoletto* and has returned as Banquo in *Macbeth*, the King of Egypt in *Aida*, Hunding in *Die Walküre*, Timur in *Turandot*, and Reverend Olin Blitch in *Susannah*, among other roles. He has also appeared frequently with the Metropolitan Opera, most recently as Zaccaria in *Nabucco*, the King of Egypt, Il Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. Last season saw Aceto return to the Dallas Opera as Scarpia in *Tosca*, followed by his Opera Australia debut as Walter in *Luisa Miller*, Hunding at Washington National Opera, performances of Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied* with Jaap van Zweden and the Dallas Symphony, and the roles of Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette* and Ashby in *La Fanciulla del West* at Santa Fe Opera. Aceto is

also in demand as a concert artist, including recent appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra under the baton of Franz Welser-Möst in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Verdi Requiem, and with the San Francisco Symphony in Mahler's Eighth Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Also during the 2016–17 season, he appears as Méphistophélès in New Orleans Opera's production of *Faust*.



Making his San Francisco Opera debut as Timur in *Turandot*, bass **Soloman Howard** (Timur) is a recent graduate of Washington National Opera's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. His 2016–17 season includes his return to the Metropolitan Opera in performances of the King in *Aida*, Fafner in *Das Rheingold* with North Carolina Opera, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Christoph Eschenbach and the National Symphony Orchestra, and a European concert tour with Gustavo Dudamel conducting the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra. Highlights of the recent past include Fafner in Washington National Opera's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, a Santa Fe Opera debut as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, and as Jacopo Fiesco in a new production of *Simon Boccanegra* with l'Opéra national de Bordeaux. Howard is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music and Morgan State University.



Korean-American tenor **Julius Ahn** (Pang) returned to San Francisco Opera in 2016 to reprise a role that he made his Company debut with in 2014 and which has become a signature in his repertoire, having performed Goro with Palm Beach Opera, Opera Carolina, Nashville Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Michigan Opera Theatre, and Vancouver Opera. Ahn opened the 2016–17 season by making his debut with Opera Philadelphia as Pang in *Turandot*, a role he has also performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Utah Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, and Cincinnati Opera. Also, as part of the 2016-2017 Season, Julius will reprise Pang in two additional company debuts with Pittsburgh Opera and Atlanta Opera. Additional notable

engagements include various roles in *The Nose* with the Metropolitan Opera and Opera Boston; Tanzmeister and Brighella in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Boston Lyric Opera; Sellem in *The Rake's Progress* with the Princeton Festival; and Monostatos in *The Magic Flute* with Opera Carolina and Opera Omaha.

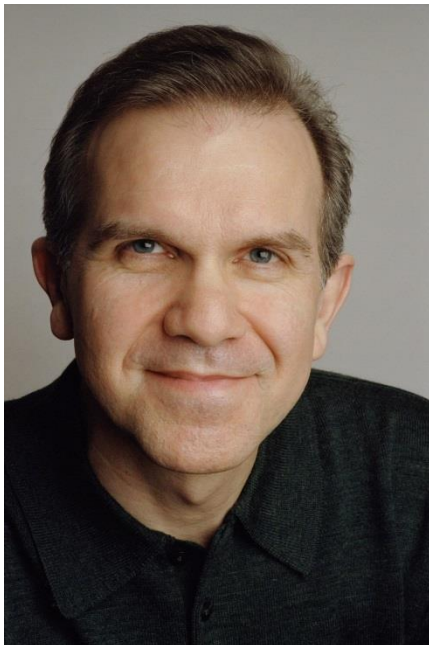


Appearing during the 2015–16 Season as Balthasar Zorn in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and Le Médecin in Debussy's *La Chute de la Maison Usher*, American tenor **Joel Sorensen** (Pong) made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2004 as the Mosquito in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, returning as Spoletta in *Tosca*, Dr. Caius in *Falstaff*, and creating the role of Mr. Pease in the 2013 world premiere of *Dolores Claiborne*. He appeared as Elder Hayes in last fall's *Susannah* and created the role of Sciortino in 2015's world premiere of *Two Women*. During his long association with New York City Opera he performed in more than two dozen productions, including *Prince Igor*, *Falstaff*, *La Rondine*, *Il Trittico*, *Mefistofele*, and *Mathis der Maler*. Other career highlights include Goro

(*Madama Butterfly*), Monostatos (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Andrès, Cochenille, Pitichinaccio, and Frantz in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Metropolitan Opera; Don Curzio (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) and Wilhelm (*The Ghosts of Versailles*) at Los Angeles Opera; Mime (*Das Rheingold*) with Longborough Festival, UK; and Andres (*Wozzeck*) with the Landestheater in Salzburg.



American bass-baritone **Brad Walker** (A Mandarin) is a second-year San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow and graduate of the 2015 Merola Opera Program, where he appeared as Betto in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*. He has appeared in the title role *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Don Magnifico (*La Cenerentola*), and Colline (*La Bohème*) with Yale Opera where he received an Artist Diploma from the Yale School of Music. While earning a Master's of Music from the University of Kansas, he appeared as Mr. Peachum (*The Beggar's Opera*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) and Orgon (*Tartuffe*). He also performed as Pangloss (*Candide*) and Olin Blitch (*Susannah*) during his time receiving a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University. He has been an apprentice with Des Moines Metro Opera, Chautauqua Opera Company and Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and received an award in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.



Making his San Francisco Opera debut as Emperor Altoum in *Turandot*, veteran tenor **Robert Brubaker** has been a frequent performer at the Metropolitan Opera, including as Mime in *Siegfried* and *Das Rheingold*, Maletestino in *Francesca da Rimini*, the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*, and Chairman Mao in John Adams' *Nixon in China*. He has also recently performed as the Jailer/Inquisitor in *Il Prigionero* at the Teatro Liceu in Barcelona; Herod in *Salome* with the Dallas Opera; Old Man Marshall in Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Anna Nicole* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; Alviano in *Die Gezeichneten*, Dr. Caius in *Falstaff*, and Begearss in *The Ghosts of Versailles* at Los Angeles Opera; Luigi in *Il Tabarro* and Canio in *I Pagliacci* at Opera Theatre of St Louis; and Wilmer McLean / J. Edgar Hoover in Philip Glass' *Appomattox* at Washington National Opera. Brubaker's 2016–17 season includes performances of *Herod* at Pittsburgh Opera.