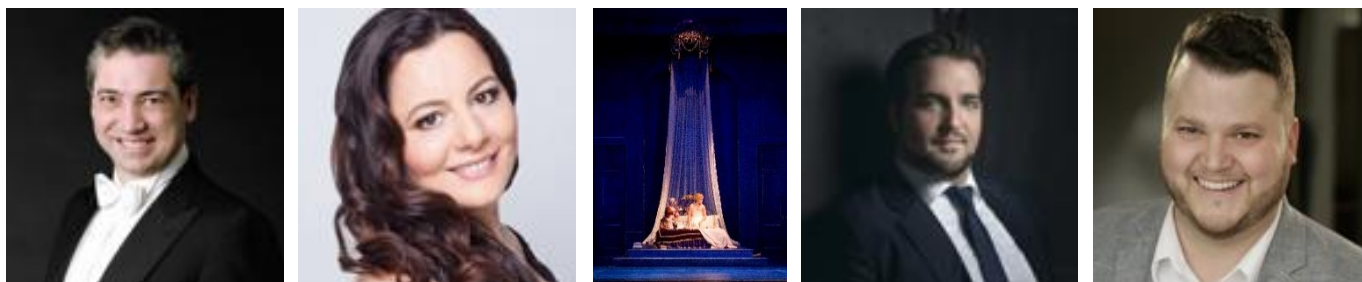


## SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA PRESENTS PUCCINI'S *MANON LESCAUT* IN A REVIVAL OF  
OLIVIER TAMBOSI AND FRANK PHILIPP SCHLÖSSMANN'S PRODUCTION**

**Former Music Director Nicola Luisotti Returns to Conduct Lianna Haroutounian and  
Brian Jagde in Puccini's First Major Hit**

**Tickets available at [sfopera.com](http://sfopera.com) and (415) 864-3330**



(From left to right) Conductor Nicola Luisotti (© Rita Simonini); soprano Lianna Haroutounian (© Stepan Atamian); San Francisco Opera's 2006 *Manon Lescaut* (© Terrence McCarthy); tenor Brian Jagde (© Simon Pauly); baritone Anthony Clark Evans (© Kristin Hobermann)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (October 17, 2019) — Director **Olivier Tambosi**'s production of *Manon Lescaut*, composer Giacomo Puccini's first triumph, returns to San Francisco Opera for six performances on the War Memorial Opera House stage, from November 8 through the 26th.

Based on Antoine François Prévost's scandalous 1731 novel that was banned in France upon publication, *Manon Lescaut* reunites soprano **Lianna Haroutounian** and tenor **Brian Jagde** for role debuts in yet another Puccini opera, after their last appearance together in San Francisco Opera's 2014 *Tosca*.

This production also heralds the return of former San Francisco Opera music director **Nicola Luisotti**, whose work here led the *New York Times* to declare him an "ideal" maestro whose "flexible conducting and apt pacing" underscored the "empathy" he showed singers.

Initially unveiled at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2005 and later staged at the Houston Grand Opera, production designer **Frank Philipp Schlössmann**'s opulent vision for *Manon Lescaut* first arrived at San Francisco Opera in November 2006. The *San Francisco Chronicle* praised its "elegantly detailed sets and costumes" as having "conjured up the 18th century French milieu without apology or compromise," and the *San Francisco Examiner* dubbed it "the best Puccini we've had in at least a decade."

When *Manon Lescaut* originally premiered in 1893, it signaled the arrival of a new talent in the 19th-century opera: Italian composer Giacomo Puccini. His first opera, *Le Villi*, had been, at best, a mild success, and his second, *Edgar*, was a total flop. It was with this third attempt that Puccini finally hit his stride: *Manon Lescaut* marked the start of a fruitful period for Puccini, whose subsequent three operas—*La Bohème*, *Tosca*, and *Madama Butterfly*—would likewise be considered masterpieces.

*Manon Lescaut*'s libretto, credited to five different writers, includes the contributions of Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, who would continue to collaborate with Puccini on his next three works.

As Puccini's teenage heroine Manon, the Armenian soprano **Lianna Haroutounian** makes her fourth role debut on the War Memorial Opera House stage, having previously starred in the title roles of Puccini's *Tosca* (2014) and *Madama Butterfly* (2016), as well as in the role of Nedda in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (2018). An international star with credits at London's Royal Opera, Madrid's Teatro Real, and Vienna State Opera, Haroutounian was hailed by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for her "vocal splendor and theatrical finesse," making each of her appearances a "joy."

Starring opposite Haroutounian is American tenor **Brian Jagde**, who will likewise make a role debut as the young, love-struck student Des Grieux. In the past, Jagde has "brought energy and ardor" (*San Francisco Chronicle*) to San Francisco Opera in lead roles like Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* (2014), Don José in *Carmen* (2016), Radamès in *Aida* (2016), Calaf in *Turandot* (2017), and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* (2012, 2014, and 2018). Altogether, he has appeared in 13 productions with the Company, starting in 2010, when he was a San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow. Jagde also made international role debuts this year with Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam and Don Alvaro in Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* at the Opéra National de Paris. After debuting his Des Grieux here at San Francisco Opera, Jagde will reprise the role in December for Germany's Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Puerto Rican tenor **Rafael Davila** will also tackle the part of Des Grieux in a one-night-only performance on November 26, for his first appearance with San Francisco Opera. Davila has previously performed the role of Des Grieux at Opera de Valencia and Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu. In 2017, he made an unexpected yet critically acclaimed debut at the Metropolitan Opera as Don José in *Carmen*, stepping in after the lead tenor fell ill.

Also headlining *Manon Lescaut* are **Anthony Clark Evans** as Manon's brother Lescaut and **Philip Skinner** as the lecherous yet powerful Geronte di Ravoire, whose riches seduce, then destroy, the title character. Clark Evans, an American baritone, has previously starred alongside Lianna Haroutounian in 2016's *Madama Butterfly*. American bass-baritone Philip Skinner, meanwhile, has been a frequent presence in San Francisco Opera's 2019–20 Season, with recent roles as the Duke of Verona in *Romeo and Juliet* and Dansker in *Billy Budd*.

The cast also features the talents of five San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows: tenor **Christopher Oglesby** as Edmondo, tenor **Zhengyi Bai** as the Dancing Master and Lamplighter, mezzo-soprano **Ashley Dixon** as the Singer, baritone **SeokJong Baek** as the Innkeeper and Naval Captain, and bass-baritone **Christian Pursell** as the Sergeant of Archers.

**Duane Schuler** provided lighting design for this production, and choreography is by **Lawrence Pech**. Chorus director **Ian Robertson** directs the San Francisco Opera Chorus.

Leading the San Francisco Opera Orchestra will be a familiar face: Italian conductor **Nicola Luisotti**, who served as music director here from 2009 to 2018. Celebrated as an "irrepressible ball of energy" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), Luisotti brings a personal connection to Puccini's work: According to Luisotti, Puccini invited one of his distant relatives, Don Guido Luisotti, to go bird hunting together near Italy's Massaciuccoli Lake. Luisotti has conducted *La Traviata* and *Rigoletto* at the Metropolitan Opera last season and is currently the principal guest conductor at Madrid's Teatro Real.

Luisotti has conducted Puccini's work for international stages including London's Royal Opera and Madrid's Teatro Real. In a video for the Royal Opera, Luisotti stated he feels Puccini's "genius" comes, in part, because "he speaks directly to the heart."

Sung in Italian with English supertitles, the six performances of *Manon Lescaut* are scheduled for November 8 (7:30 pm), November 13 (7:30 pm), November 16 (7:30 pm), November 20 (7:30 pm), November 24 (2 pm), and November 26 (7:30 pm).

### **TICKETS AND INFORMATION**

Tickets for *Manon Lescaut* are priced from \$26 to \$408. A \$2 facility fee is included in all Balcony sections. All other sections include a \$3-per-ticket facility fee. For tickets, visit [sfopera.com](http://sfopera.com), call (415) 864-3330 or visit the San Francisco Opera Box Office at 301 Van Ness Avenue. Box Office hours: Monday 10 am–5 pm; Tuesday through Saturday 10 am–6 pm. Standing Room tickets go on sale at 10 am on the morning of each performance. Standing room tickets are \$10 each, cash only and limited to two tickets per person. Casting, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change.

Each presentation of *Manon Lescaut* at the War Memorial Opera House features a 25-minute Pre-Opera Talk by musician and educator Marcia Green. Beginning 55 minutes prior to curtain, Pre-Opera Talks are open to tickets holders for the corresponding performance.

The War Memorial Opera House is located at 301 Van Ness Avenue, within walking distance of the Civic Center BART Station and near numerous bus lines, including 5, 21, 47, 49 and the F Market Street. Van Ness Construction: Due to construction for the SFMTA Van Ness Improvement Project, there is limited access to pick-up and drop-off at 301 Van Ness Avenue, and bus lines 47, 49 and 90 may experience travel delays. Please use the white loading zone at 450 Franklin Street (behind the Opera House) for rideshare pick-up and drop-off. For further information about public transportation and parking, visit [sfopera.com/plan-your-visit/directions-and-parking](http://sfopera.com/plan-your-visit/directions-and-parking).

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## MANON LESCAUT CASTING / CALENDAR

\*San Francisco Opera Debut †Role Debut ‡Current Adler Fellow

All performances take place at the War Memorial Opera House  
301 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco CA 94102

**MANON LESCAUT** by Giacomo Puccini

**November 8** (7:30 p.m.), **13** (7:30 p.m.), **16** (7:30 p.m.), **20** (7:30 p.m.), **24** (2 p.m.), **26** (7:30 p.m.), **2019**

Lyric Opera of Chicago production

Libretto by Ruggero Leoncavallo, Marco Praga, Giuseppe Giacosa, Domenico Oliva, and Luigi Illica  
Based on the novel *L'Histoire du chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* by Antoine François Prévost

Sung in Italian with English supertitles

Approximate running time: 3 hours, including two intermissions

First Performance: Teatro Regio, Turin (February 1, 1893)  
First SFO performance: Civic Auditorium (September 28, 1926)  
Most recent SFO performance: 2006–07 Season (opened November 19, 2006)

### Cast:

*Manon Lescaut*

*Chevalier des Grieux*

*Chevalier des Grieux (Nov. 26)*

*Lescaut*

*Geronte*

*Edmondo*

*Singer*

*Dancing Master/Lamplighter*

*Innkeeper/Naval Captain*

*Sergeant of Archers*

*Madrigal singers*

**Lianna Haroutounian**†

**Brian Jagde**†

**Rafael Davila**\*

**Anthony Clark Evans**†

**Philip Skinner**†

**Christopher Oglesby**††

**Ashley Dixon**††

**Zhengyi Bai**††

**SeokJong Baek**††

**Christian Pursell**††

**Angela Eden Moser**†, **Jesslyn Thomas**†, **Laurel Cameron Porter**†, **Sally Mouzon**

### Creative Team:

*Conductor*

*Director*

*Production Designer*

*Lighting Designer*

*Fight Director*

*Choreographer*

*Chorus Director*

**Nicola Luisotti**

**Olivier Tambosi**

**Frank Philipp Schlössmann**

**Duane Schuler**

**Dave Maier**

**Lawrence Pech**

**Ian Robertson**

**San Francisco Opera Orchestra and San Francisco Opera Chorus**

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### CORPORATE SPONSOR



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