



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA RETURNS TO LIVE PERFORMANCES,
PRESENTS ONLINE RING FESTIVAL AND LAUNCHES
NEW ORIGINAL DIGITAL PROGRAMMING THIS SPRING

New Adaptation of *The Barber of Seville* Starring Lucas Meachem, Daniela Mack,
Laura Krumm, Alek Shrader Live at Marin Center Drive-In, April 23–May 15

The Adlers: Live at the Drive-In
April 29, May 6, May 13

Wagner's *Ring Cycle* Streams in March Accompanied by
Live *Ring Festival* Virtual Events Featuring Special Guests

New Original Digital Content Releases:

In Song

Atrium Sessions

North Stage Door Podcast



Lucas Meachem (photo: Simon Pauly); Roderick Cox (photo: Susie Knoll); *In Song: J'Nai Bridges* (photo: Taylor Ballantyne); Wagner's *Die Walküre* (photo: Cory Weaver/San Francisco Opera)

San Francisco, CA (February 16, 2021; **updated February 18, 2021; updated April 1, 2021**)
— San Francisco Opera Tad and Dianne Taube General Director Matthew Shilvock
announces re-envisioned Spring 2021 programming including a return to live
performances with a new production of Gioachino Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and

concerts offered in a drive-in setting at San Rafael's Marin Center in April and May. Throughout the month of March, the Company will present a *Ring Festival* featuring free streams of the 2018 performances of Richard Wagner's epic, 15-hour *Ring* cycle and live events including panel discussions and lectures for deeper engagement.

Also this spring, San Francisco Opera launches three new programs of original digital content:

- *In Song*, a series of video portraits featuring remarkable San Francisco Opera artists who draw us into their distinctive spheres through stories and song—from classical to bluegrass to spirituals.
- *Atrium Sessions*, intimate, short-form video performances showcasing the diverse talents of San Francisco Opera artists, filmed and recorded in the Company's Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater.
- *North Stage Door*, a podcast taking listeners into the swirl of creativity, stagecraft and performance at San Francisco Opera.

General Director Matthew Shilvock said:

There is an incredible reawakening of the arts ahead of us. As the pandemic recedes, we need that visceral energy of live performance—artists and audiences connected in magical moments of emotive expression—more than ever. At San Francisco Opera we are committed to getting back to it safely this spring.

Our spring offerings are both a return and a springboard. We are excited to share a group of experiences that we hope will connect our community with the emotional power of the human voice. I am thrilled that we will be bringing live opera to the Bay Area in late April with a newly conceived drive-in *Barber of Seville* with fabulous artists, the glorious San Francisco Opera Orchestra and a production that reflects the joyous return of music making to our lives. This will be complemented by three new digital offerings that, in different ways, connect us with the immediacy of song and the urgency to create. And then, in a special March edition of our popular weekend archival streams, we are offering a presentation of our acclaimed 2018 *Ring* cycle, accompanied by a *Ring Festival* to create a month-long immersion into one of the greatest artistic works ever created.

I have so much optimism for the future, not only the immediate return of opera but for where we go next. As we welcome Eun Sun Kim as music director, we look towards our centennial in 2022–23 and to our second century. This is an inflection point where we expand and diversify our art and our audience, reconnecting our amazing Bay Area community to the vital storytelling power of opera. Simply put, we want to be more to more people. I look forward to a future marked by experimentation and innovation. The new directions of our spring programming are just the beginning.

The drive-in events mark San Francisco Opera's first live performances since the beginning of the global pandemic, which caused the cancellation of the Company's Summer and Fall 2020 seasons. In April 2020 the Company began offering free opera streams, virtual events, interactive lectures and other online programming as part of *Opera is ON*, an initiative to bring opera to Bay Area audiences and the global community.

The resumption of live performance this spring is made possible by San Francisco Opera's partnership with a team of University of California San Francisco (UCSF) doctors led by Dr. George Rutherford and other leading health professionals. Through weekly consultations over the last nine months, safety protocols have been developed in accordance with state, local and industry guidelines regarding testing, social distancing, masks and other controls to ensure a safe return to live performance. Last fall, the collaboration with UCSF enabled live recordings within the Taube Atrium Theater. The Company is now expanding those practices toward the in-person format at the Marin Center.

The performances of *Barber of Seville* and *The Adlers: Live at the Drive-In* are taking place at the Marin Center thanks to the partnership of the County of Marin; Public Health Officer of Marin Dr. Matt Willis; and Director of Cultural Services in Marin Gabriella Calicchio. Located ten minutes north of the Golden Gate Bridge and surrounded by the beautiful Frank Lloyd Wright architecture of the Marin County Civic Center, the venue is a welcoming environment to present live opera with safety protocols that meet the County's strict guidelines.

Marin County Public Health Officer Dr. Matt Willis said: "Public health is really about our well-being as a community, and that includes the arts. I've been so impressed that every

piece of the production has been designed around the health and safety of the audience and the artists. We're thrilled to be partnering with San Francisco Opera to bring this event to Marin. It's fitting that this happens at the Marin Center, which has played a key role in every phase of our pandemic response. Our community came here for COVID testing, and then for vaccinations and will come to support their health through the power of the arts. I see this as a signal of moving into a new chapter—finding ways to do what we value, together, while staying safe in the last months of this pandemic. The arts are a vital support for our health and well-being."

Professor of Epidemiology & Biostatistics and the Director of the Prevention and Public Health Group at UCSF Dr. George Rutherford said: "San Francisco Opera has been extremely conscientious in designing a protocol that is maximally protective of performers, patrons and staff. Our small group of UCSF physicians has worked closely with the Opera to ensure that the best evidence and tested approaches have been used. On behalf of our advisory group—Drs. Mark Almond, Peter Chin-Hong, Robert Harrison, Sânziana Roman and Clark Rosen—congratulations on bringing live arts back to the Bay Area."

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

11 live drive-in performances at Marin Center: April 23–May 15

San Francisco Opera returns to live opera performance with a new adaptation of one of the greatest operas in the repertoire, Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*). American director Matthew Ozawa has adapted the beloved opera into a 90-minute (no intermission), backstage comedy that retains the work's humor and vocal fireworks while linking it to the poignancy of human connection. The opera will be performed in an English translation by Marcie Stapp.

Ozawa said: "After such a lengthy period of hibernation, our drive-in *Barber of Seville* is a chance to bring what we love back to life while reawakening our resilient creativity. Coming at a time when audiences need laughter and true catharsis, we pull back the curtain to reveal San Francisco Opera's backstage world of dressing rooms, divas and divine escapades. Our goal is to breathe life back into live grand operatic performance and connect with joy, liberation and love."

The opera's fast-moving action and melodic flights will take place on an adapted version of the unit set originally intended for San Francisco Opera's new production of

Beethoven's *Fidelio*, which was postponed due to the pandemic. Work on the set continued in the Company's scene shop during the shutdown and the *Barber* creative team utilized the structure's innate flexibility of design for the Marin Center drive-in experience. Conceived by Bay Area designer Alexander V. Nichols, the set and projection designs will take on the appearance of the War Memorial Opera House's backstage dressing rooms. The production features new costumes designed by Jessica Jahn and lighting for the open-air production by JAX Messenger.

Conductor Roderick Cox makes his Company debut leading the San Francisco Opera Orchestra musicians in a socially distanced ensemble. The opera, which will be presented without chorus given health protocols and shorn of a few characters, is anchored by a stellar cast. Baritone Lucas Meachem, a "robust and smooth-toned Figaro" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), is the charismatic barber whose tongue-twisting music includes the famous aria "Largo al factotum." Mezzo-soprano Daniela Mack portrays Rosina, for which the *Guardian* praised her "dark tone and formidable coloratura," with Laura Krumm singing the final three performances. Alek Shrader, whom the *New York Times* hailed as a "virile Almadiva with matinee-idol good looks," reprises the role of the Count which he performed opposite his wife, Mack, at the War Memorial Opera House in 2014.

Rosina's guardian, Dr. Bartolo, will be performed by bass Philip Skinner, and bass Kenneth Kellogg is the music teacher, Don Basilio. Mezzo-soprano Catherine Cook reprises her portrayal of Berta, a part she has sung in five previous productions with the Company.

Audiences for these rain-or-shine drive-in performances have a choice of purchasing tickets for one of two neighboring locations on the Marin Center campus. The Fairgrounds has a view of the set and live performers, while the Lagoon area allows ticket holders to experience the performance live via simulcast to a drive-in movie screen.

For each night of *The Barber Seville*, San Francisco Opera will offer a limited number of free spots for the Lagoon simulcast area to organizations employing essential workers such as healthcare workers, teachers and grocery workers, as well as to community organizations in Marin. Representatives from organizations interested in securing free tickets can contact: groupsales@sfoera.com.

A stream of the production will be available to purchase for \$25 shortly after the final performance. More information will be released later this spring.

THE ADLERS: LIVE AT THE DRIVE-IN

Marin Center: April 29, May 6, May 13

Along with *The Barber of Seville* at the Marin Center Drive-In, Bay Area audiences will have three opportunities to hear San Francisco Opera's eleven resident artists live in an open-air concert. The brilliantly talented Adler Fellows will command the spotlight in a 70-minute program of operatic favorites by composers such as Mozart, Rossini, Puccini, Verdi and Lehár. The 2021 Adler Fellows include sopranos Anne-Marie MacIntosh, Elisa Sunshine and Esther Tanea; mezzo-soprano Simone McIntosh; tenors Zhengyi Bai, Christopher Colmenero and Christopher Oglesby; baritone Timothy Murray; bass Stefan Egerstrom and pianists Kseniia Polstiankina Barrad and Andrew King.

Audiences for these rain-or-shine drive-in performances have a choice of purchasing tickets for one of two neighboring locations on the Marin Center campus. The Fairgrounds has a view of the set and live performers, while the Lagoon area allows ticket holders to experience the performance live via simulcast to a drive-in movie screen.

For each night of *The Adlers: Live at the Drive-In*, San Francisco Opera will offer a limited number of free spots for the Lagoon simulcast area to organizations employing essential workers such as healthcare workers, teachers and grocery workers, as well as to community organizations in Marin. Representatives from organizations interested in securing free tickets can contact: groupsales@sfopera.com.

A stream of the concert will be available to purchase for \$15 shortly after the final performance. More information will be released later this spring.

ORIGINAL DIGITAL RELEASES:

IN SONG / ATRIUM SESSIONS / NORTH STAGE DOOR

San Francisco Opera unveils three new programs sharing the beauty, storytelling and community of opera in original, short-form digital content. The Company is collaborating with creative producer and strategic advisor Elena Park, founder of Lumahai Productions, to realize these new digital initiatives launching this spring. These digital

programs are made possible, in part, through generous gifts to the Creative Edge Fund, founded by Carol and Dixon Doll. All programs are free and available at sfopera.com.

IN SONG

In Song is a series of intimate video portraits featuring remarkable San Francisco Opera artists who draw us into their distinctive spheres through song and stories. In each 8–10-minute offering, a singer will invite us to see who they are in the world, their cultural backgrounds and how they express themselves through deep connections to song. Music will span bluegrass, classical and spirituals, as well as traditional Egyptian and Samoan selections. Showcased artists include Egyptian-born, New Zealand soprano Amina Edris, American mezzo-sopranos Jamie Barton and J’Nai Bridges and Samoan-born, New Zealand tenor Pene Pati. Six features will be released in the coming months, free to the public.

J’Nai Bridges launches the series on March 11. *In Song: J’Nai Bridges* will feature a medley of spirituals, including “I’m Determined to Walk with Jesus” and “I Don’t Feel No Ways Tired,” and a performance of Schumann’s “Widmung.” The episode takes us into J’Nai’s “village” outside Tacoma, Washington, showing the community that has provided her foundation. Filmed on January 29 at the Blue Gallery in New York City, her partners include pianist and frequent collaborator Damien Sneed and drummer Jonathan Barber, both of whom, like J’Nai, grew up in the Black church, and London-born, Nigeria-raised bass player Michael Olatuja.

In Song: Jamie Barton will explore the mezzo-soprano’s roots coming up in “The Pocket” in Georgia—a remote valley without wi-fi where she was steeped in the music of gospel and bluegrass. As Jamie takes on music from classical to bluegrass, *In Song* visits her family in the foothills of Johns Mountain, where her father taught her how to sing harmony in the back pew of their church.

In addition to beautiful classical selections, Amina Edris will share traditional Egyptian music that infused her childhood in Cairo, and Pene Pati will welcome us into the world of traditional Samoan and Maori music—while accompanying himself on guitar and ukulele.

ATRIUM SESSIONS

Immerse yourself in the emotional world of intimate music making with the *Atrium Sessions*, beautifully captured offerings shot on the campus of San Francisco Opera. The Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater provides the setting for performances of miniature masterpieces by Claude Debussy, Clara Schumann, Florence Price, Noël Coward and Gabriela Lena Frank, among others. Debuting in April, these short videos will be shared every few weeks.

The first sessions will showcase a number of the Company's favorite Bay Area artists including soprano Rhoslyn Jones, mezzo-soprano Laura Krumm, baritones Edward Nelson and Efraín Solís and bass-baritone Michael Sumuel, all graduates of the San Francisco Opera Center's training programs, in collaboration with members of San Francisco Opera's dedicated music staff. Later sessions may include arias and chamber music, featuring musicians of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra as well as guest artists.

NORTH STAGE DOOR

Step into the world of opera through *North Stage Door*, a new podcast that takes you into the swirl of creativity, stagecraft and performance at San Francisco Opera. Lively stories and insightful interviews open a window into the complex inner workings of this vibrant company and the many aspects necessary to make a rich, multi-faceted art form come to life. Luminaries of the field, including opera stars, composers, directors, writers, craftspeople and musicians from the pit to the stage, will be showcased in this series of four 45-minute episodes, featuring Company insiders as your guides for segments from "Finding Gold in the Grooves" to "Opera Gossip Girl."

The pilot episode of *North Stage Door*, scheduled to debut in late March, will focus on *The Barber of Seville*—a masterpiece hiding in plain sight!—in conjunction with the Company's drive-in performances at the Marin Center. Audiences will hear about how this familiar work has been specially adapted to meet the demands of these singular times, illustrating how the Company is forging a creative path forward.

RING FESTIVAL

March 5–30

Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*), in Francesca Zambello's "boldly contemporary" (*New York Times*) staging, a co-production with Washington National Opera, returns as part of San Francisco Opera's first-ever virtual *Ring Festival*. The four parts of the massive, 15-hour *Ring* cycle tetralogy, which played to sold-out audiences at the War Memorial Opera House in summer 2018, will stream in four weekend access periods accompanied by a diverse complement of live *Ring*-related events throughout the month.

The performances feature former Company music director Donald Runnicles conducting the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and an international cast headed by Irène Theorin as Brünnhilde, Greer Grimsley as Wotan, Daniel Brenna in his Company debut as Siegfried, Brandon Jovanovich as Froh and Siegmund, Karita Mattila as Sieglinde, *Ring* veteran Falk Struckmann in his Company and role debuts as Alberich, Jamie Barton as Fricka, the Second Norn and Waltraute and Ronnita Miller as Erda and the First Norn, among many other leading artists.

Zambello's production, which includes themes and imagery associated with American history, features the creative work of set designer Michael Yeargan, costume designer Catherine Zuber, lighting designer Mark McCullough and projection designers S. Katy Tucker and Jan Hartley.

The *Ring Festival* kicks off on March 5 with a Festival Opening Salute, for Festival Pass holders and All-Access Pass holders, hosted by Company General Director Matthew Shilvock welcoming special guests Zambello, Runnicles, Grimsley and former Metropolitan Opera Company Manager Stephen A. Brown for a lively discussion and Wagner quiz. The event calendar also includes interviews with luminaries such as Jane Eaglen, Nina Stemme, Grace Bumbry, **Theorin**, Mattila, Jovanovich, *San Francisco Chronicle* classical music critic Joshua Kosman, *New Yorker* critic and author Alex Ross and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner; introductory lectures for the four operas by San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna; and presentations on topics ranging from the *Ring* and feminism with Naomi André, Miller and Zambello; the *Ring* and the Environment with Kirsten Paige and Zambello; the history of the *Ring* in San Francisco; a conversation with Bumbry about becoming the

first Black singer to perform at Bayreuth, hosted by Kenneth Overton; food and wine in the *Ring* by Fred Plotkin and Barton; and a look at legendary Wagnerian soprano Kirsten Flagstad's San Francisco Opera career by writer Paul Thomason, co-hosted with the Kirsten Flagstad Museum in Norway. All live events take place on Zoom, allowing participants the opportunity to ask questions of the artists and presenters.

Wagner's *Ring* cycle, unveiled in 1876 at the composer's theater in Bayreuth, Germany, remains one of the most ambitious and all-encompassing works of art ever created. Its breathtaking scope and brilliant synthesis of music, theater and stagecraft continues to offer inspiration and provocation to artists, critics and audiences and is a "bucket list" cultural event. Typically necessitating great expense for travel, tickets and accommodations while taking in the four operas in succession, experiencing the *Ring* fosters a unique sense of community and, for some, an ongoing relationship with the work. Through free streams of San Francisco Opera's vaunted production and a bevy of ancillary events, the *Ring* experience will now be widely available online.

Free Festival Passes will be available for high school/college students and teachers. Please email patronservices@sfoera.com from your school address to request a free Festival Pass.

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SPRING 2021 CALENDAR AND TICKET INFORMATION

LIVE AT THE MARIN CENTER DRIVE-IN

10 Avenue of the Flags, San Rafael, CA 94903. *Rain or Shine

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

San Francisco Opera presents Gioachino Rossini's *The Barber Seville* in a new 90-minute adaptation staged by Matthew Ozawa for drive-in audiences at San Rafael's Marin Center. Featuring San Francisco Opera Orchestra musicians conducted by Roderick Cox and a cast of leading Rossinians, the production marks the Company's return to live music making with all of the energy and élan of Rossini's timeless comedy.

April 23, 24, 27, 30; May 1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 14, 15, 2021 (All performances begin at 8 pm)

Cast:

Figaro

Lucas Meachem

<i>Rosina</i>	Daniela Mack / Laura Krumm (May 11, 14, 15)
<i>Count Almaviva</i>	Alek Shrader
<i>Doctor Bartolo</i>	Philip Skinner
<i>Don Basilio</i>	Kenneth Kellogg
<i>Berta</i>	Catherine Cook

Creative Team:

<i>Conductor</i>	Roderick Cox
<i>Production</i>	Matthew Ozawa
<i>Set and Projection Designer</i>	Alexander V. Nichols
<i>Costume Designer</i>	Jessica Jahn
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	JAX Messenger

Tickets:

\$250 per car (Fairgrounds: main lot with view of live performance)

\$50 per car (Lagoon: view of live performance simulcast to a drive-in movie screen)

\$25 (digital at-home stream; available in late spring 2021)

Tickets must be purchased ahead of time; no tickets will be sold onsite at the drive-in.

San Francisco Opera will offer a limited number of free spots in the Lagoon simulcast area to organizations employing essential workers such as healthcare workers, teachers and grocery workers, as well as to community organizations in Marin. Representatives from organizations interested in securing free tickets can contact: groupsales@sfoera.com.

Subscribers and donors have priority access to purchase tickets beginning March 9; tickets go on sale to the general public March 23. To purchase, visit sfoera.com or call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330.

Vehicles will be admitted to the drive-in area on a first-come, first-serve basis. **Motorcycles and convertibles are not allowed at the Marin Drive-In.** Audience members experience the production from their vehicles and the music will be transmitted through FM radio.

For more information about these performances, sfoera.com/onstage.

THE ADLERS: LIVE AT THE DRIVE-IN

San Francisco Opera's resident artists, the Adler Fellows, perform a live, 70-minute program of popular arias, duets and scenes from the opera repertoire with piano accompaniment at the Marin Center Drive-In.

April 29; May 6, 13, 2021 (All performances begin at 8pm)

Sopranos: Anne-Marie MacIntosh, Elisa Sunshine, Esther Tonea

Mezzo-soprano: Simone McIntosh

Tenors: Zhengyi Bai, Christopher Colmenero, Christopher Oglesby

Baritone: Timothy Murray

Bass: Stefan Egerstrom

Pianists: Kseniia Polstiankina Barrad, Andrew King

Tickets:

\$150 per car (Fairgrounds: main lot with view of live performance)

\$50 per car (Lagoon: view of live performance simulcast to a drive-in movie screen)

\$15 (digital at-home stream; available in late spring 2021)

Tickets must be purchased ahead of time; no tickets will be sold onsite at the drive-in.

San Francisco Opera will offer a limited number of free spots in the Lagoon simulcast area to organizations employing essential workers such as healthcare workers, teachers and grocery workers, as well as to community organizations in Marin. Representatives from organizations interested in securing free tickets can contact: groupsales@sfoera.com.

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For more information about these performances, sfoera.com/onstage.

RING FESTIVAL

Encompassing four operas—*Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*—Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*) is a masterpiece of mythic drama and musical storytelling that is unparalleled in the history of the performing arts. San Francisco Opera's sold-out performances of the *Ring* cycle, filmed in HD at the War Memorial Opera House in June/July 2018, will be streamed for free in March. American director Francesca Zambello's acclaimed staging of the tetralogy, a co-production with Washington National Opera, features an international cast, including Iréne Theorin (Brünnhilde), Greer Grimsley (Wotan), Daniel Brenna (Siegfried), Karita Mattila (Sieglinde), Brandon Jovanovich (Siegmund and Froh), Falk Struckmann (Alberich), Jamie Barton (Fricka, Waltraute and the Second Norn), Ronnita Miller (Erda and the First Norn) and many others, under the baton of conductor Donald Runnicles.

March 6–7

DAS RHEINGOLD: In the cycle's prelude, greed and vengeance trigger a chain of events fraught with corruption and struggle (2 hours, 32 minutes)

March 13–14

DIE WALKÜRE: A father's blinding ambition and a daughter's defiance drive the story forward. (3 hours, 46 minutes)

March 20–21

SIEGFRIED: A fearless, young hero battles otherworldly challenges on a journey to discover his destiny. (3 hours, 56 minutes)

March 27–28

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG: The cycle reaches its transcendent climax with a suspenseful tale of bravery, sacrifice, destruction and renewal. (4 hours, 24 minutes)

Each free opera stream is viewable on demand with registration at sfopera.com, beginning at 10 am (Pacific) on the first streaming date through 11:59 pm the following day. Current San Francisco Opera subscribers and members (donors of \$75 and up) retain access to opera titles after their window of public access.

LIVE VIRTUAL RING EVENTS (March 5–30)

All live events take place on Zoom, allowing participants to interact and ask questions of the artists and presenters.

RING FESTIVAL TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Individual tickets to live ancillary events: \$15 (Individual tickets are not available for March 5 Opening Night Salute and March 30 Closing Night Toast).

Festival Pass (all Festival events): \$99 (\$69 for San Francisco Opera subscriber/donor)

All-Access Festival Pass (Includes the Subscriber/Donor Ring Festival Pass and a \$75 tax-deductible donation that grants access to San Francisco Opera online streaming portal, including the 2018 *Ring* cycle productions after initial stream period): \$144

On-demand recordings of Festival events will be available to ticket holders 24 hours after each event.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit sfopera.com/ringfestival or call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330.

Free Festival Passes will be offered to high school and college students and teachers (requests can be sent to patronservices@sfopera.com from the school e-mail address).

Friday, March 5 (1 pm PT), 2021

FESTIVAL OPENING SALUTE (Special Event for Festival Pass holders and All-Access Festival Pass holders only)

Ring director Francesca Zambello, conductor Donald Runnicles, bass-baritone Greer Grimsley and San Francisco Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock open the festival with an intimate talk about the Company's 2018 production. Following the conversation, former Metropolitan Opera Company Manager and longtime panelist on the Met Opera Radio Quiz Stephen A. Brown tests the knowledge of the featured guests (and the audience!) with a Wagner quiz.

Saturday, March 6 (1 pm PT), 2021

DAS RHEINGOLD: I Saw the World End: Exploring Wagner's Ring, lecture by San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna (individual tickets: \$15)

Explore the myth, music and majesty of *The Ring of the Nibelung* with San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna. In this session, learn about Richard Wagner's 28-year quest to forge Teutonic legend into his towering statement about avarice, betrayal and redemption. Then delve into the first opera of the cycle, *Das Rheingold*, and discover how Wotan, head of the Gods, allows lust for dominion to set in motion the inexorable forces of doom.

Tuesday, March 9 (5:30 pm PT), 2021

WAGNERISM: A conversation with Alex Ross and Tony Kushner, moderated by San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna (individual tickets: \$15)

Author and *New Yorker* critic Alex Ross joins Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner for a discussion about Ross' new book, *Wagnerism: Art and Politics in the Shadow of Music*. In his review of the book, Kushner hailed *Wagnerism* as "magnificently realized as it is monumentally ambitious." San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna moderates the conversation, followed by a Q&A.

Friday, March 12 (10 am PT), 2021

SITTING DOWN WITH SIEGMUND AND SIEGLINDE: Brandon Jovanovich and Karita Mattila in Conversation with Joshua Kosman of the San Francisco Chronicle (individual tickets: \$15)

Brandon Jovanovich and Karita Mattila reunite after their star turns as Siegmund and Sieglinde in San Francisco Opera's 2018 production of *Die Walküre*. The pair join *San Francisco Chronicle* classical music critic Joshua Kosman to discuss how they tackled these iconic roles of twins turned lovers.

Saturday, March 13 (1 pm PT), 2021

DIE WALKÜRE: I Saw the World End: Exploring Wagner's Ring, lecture by San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna (individual tickets: \$15)

Explore the myth, music and majesty of *The Ring of the Nibelung* with San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna. In Wagner's *Die Walküre*, the second opera of the *Ring*, Wotan's warrior-maiden daughter, Brünnhilde, is destined to become the self-sacrificing savior of mankind (but not the gods).

Tuesday, March 16 (5:30 pm PT), 2021

CONFRONTING CONTROVERSY: THE RING IN THE 21ST CENTURY, lecture by William Berger (individual tickets: \$15)

Does Wagner have a place in the world today? Can we, as we seek new and expanded audiences, justify the centrality of Wagner in the world of opera and beyond? William Berger, lecturer, Metropolitan Opera commentator and author of two books about the composer, including *Speaking of Wagner: Talking to Audiences about the Ring of the Nibelung*, looks at the challenge and importance of this endlessly compelling work as we reengage with its glories and problems into the future.

Friday, March 19 (1 pm PT), 2021

BECOMING BRÜNNHILDE: A Conversation with Irène Theorin, Nina Stemme and Jane Eaglen; hosted by Stephen A. Brown (individual tickets: \$15)

The heroine of Wagner's *Ring* cycle, Brünnhilde is one of the most challenging roles in the dramatic soprano repertoire. Hear how Irène Theorin, Nina Stemme and Jane Eaglen tackled this role at San Francisco Opera and beyond. Former Metropolitan Opera Company Manager Stephen A. Brown moderates the conversation, followed by a Q&A.

Saturday, March 20 (1 pm PT), 2021

SIEGFRIED: I Saw the World End: Exploring Wagner's Ring, lecture by San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna (individual tickets: \$15)

Explore the myth, music and majesty of *The Ring of the Nibelung* with San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna. In Wagner's *Siegfried*, the third opera of the *Ring*, the central figure is the great mythic hero Siegfried, who slays a dragon and wins himself the fateful ring and then sets out on a path to claim his destined bride, Brünnhilde.

Saturday, March 20 (4 pm PT), 2021

DINING ON THE RHINE: FOOD, WINE AND WAGNER'S RING CYCLE, a conversation with opera expert Fred Plotkin and mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton (individual tickets: \$15)

A self-proclaimed *Ring*-nut and a leading authority on Italian food and cooking, Fred Plotkin explores Wagner's *Ring* through food with mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton and shares gastronomic clues found in the operas to make the perfect "Wagner Meal Cycle."

Tuesday, March 23 (5:30 pm PT), 2021

(RHEIN)GOLD RUSH: A HISTORY OF THE RING IN SAN FRANCISCO, lecture by San Francisco Opera Director of Archives Barbara Rominski and Senior Manager Communications Jeffery McMillan (individual tickets: \$15)

Wagner began work on what would become *The Ring of the Nibelung* in 1848, the same year that gold was discovered in California. By the 1880s, touring companies had introduced *Die Walküre* to San Francisco stages and full *Ring* cycles soon followed, including San Francisco Opera's first star-studded production in 1935. Utilizing rarely seen materials from the San Francisco Opera Archives, this multimedia presentation explores 140 years of Bay Area fascination and engagement with one of the most ambitious works of art.

Thursday, March 25 (5:30 pm PT), 2021

GREEN WAGNER: ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES AND CHALLENGES IN WAGNER'S RING, interview with director Francesca Zambello and Wagner scholar Kirsten Paige (individual tickets: \$15)

The *Ring* begins with the purity of nature and ends in flames. Over the course of Wagner's 15-hour masterpiece, we experience how the quest for power and wealth leads to the destruction of the environment. *Ring* director Francesca Zambello joins Stanford University lecturer and Wagner scholar Kirsten Paige to discuss the themes of the environment and warnings we must heed in order to slow down climate change.

Friday, March 26 (11 am PT), 2021

BREAKING BARRIERS AT BAYREUTH: In Conversation with Grace Bumbry, hosted by baritone Kenneth Overton (individual tickets: \$15)

60 years after becoming the first Black singer to perform at Wagner's Bayreuth Festival, Grace Bumbry reflects with lauded baritone and associate producer of the upcoming documentary *Black Opera* Kenneth Overton on this pivotal moment in history in the context of urgent calls for racial equality.

Saturday, March 27 (1 pm PT), 2021

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG: I Saw the World End: Exploring Wagner's *Ring*, lecture by San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna (individual tickets: \$15)

Explore the myth, music and majesty of *The Ring of the Nibelung* with San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Dr. Clifford Cranna. In the conclusion of the *Ring*, *Götterdämmerung*, we watch the world end and a new one begin. The ring is returned to its riverbed home cleansed of its curse, and the natural order is restored with the promise of renewal and rebirth for mankind.

Saturday, March 27 (4 pm PT), 2021

KIRSTEN FLAGSTAD: A BRÜNNHILDE FOR THE AGES, lecture by writer Paul Thomason, co-hosted by Kirsten Flagstad Museum Director Annika E. Engelhart (individual tickets: \$15)

When Kirsten Flagstad made her historic Metropolitan Opera debut in 1935, it had far-reaching consequences for opera in America including prompting San Francisco Opera to take the enormous leap of presenting the Company's first-ever *Ring* cycle that autumn. Whatever she sang, she was box office gold and established lofty standards in her mostly Wagnerian repertory. Co-hosted by writer Paul Thomason and Annika E. Engelhart, director of the Kirsten Flagstad Museum in Hamar, Norway, this close look at the legendary singer's impact in the Bay Area utilizes rare recordings and photographs to bring attendees into the story of Flagstad, the Voice of the Century.

Tuesday, March 30 (5:30 pm PT), 2021

FEMINISM AND THE RING, a discussion with mezzo-soprano Ronnita Miller and director Francesca Zambello, moderated by author and professor Naomi André (individual tickets: \$15)

Ring composer and librettist Richard Wagner was no feminist. And yet he wrote such strong female characters, from earth goddess Erda to Wotan's wife, Fricka, and his daughter Brünnhilde, the heroine of the story. *Ring* director Francesca Zambello and mezzo-soprano Ronnita Miller (*Erda* 2018) join author and professor in Women's Studies at University of Michigan Naomi André for a conversation about the complexity of female characters in the *Ring* and the power of women to heal destruction.

Tuesday, March 30 (6:30 pm PT), 2021

FESTIVAL CLOSING TOAST (Special Event for Festival Pass holders and All-Access Festival Pass holders only)

Toast to the finale of the month-long *Ring Festival* in a lively discussion between San Francisco Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock, *Ring* director Francesca Zambello, author and opera scholar Naomi André and mezzo-soprano Ronnita Miller.

IN SONG

In Song: J'Nai Bridges premieres March 11

Release dates for episodes premiering in the coming months will be announced.

Free and available at sfopera.com

Remarkable San Francisco Opera artists draw us into their distinctive spheres through song and stories in this series of intimate 8–10-minute video portraits. Music will span bluegrass, classical and spirituals, as well as traditional Egyptian and Samoan selections. Showcased artists include Egyptian-born, New Zealand soprano Amina Edris, American mezzo-sopranos Jamie Barton and J'Nai Bridges and Samoan-born, New Zealand tenor Pene Pati.

In Song: J'Nai Bridges premieres March 11

Featuring mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges with Damien Sneed, piano; Jonathan Barber, drums; Michael Olatuja, bass

Elena Park and Molly McBride, series co-directors

In Song: J'Nai Bridges: Steven E. Mallorca, editor; Justin Ervin, director of photography; Randall Crafton, audio engineer; Ras Dia, associate producer

ATRIUM SESSIONS

Debuting in April, with short videos shared every few weeks to the public

Free and available at sfopera.com

Enter the emotional world of music with beautifully captured offerings shot in the Company's intimate Dianne and Tad Taube Atrium Theater. The first sessions showcase a number of the Company's favorite Bay Area artists in miniature masterpieces by Claude Debussy, Clara Schumann, Florence Price, Noël Coward and Gabriela Lena Frank, among others. Artists include soprano Rhoslyn Jones with pianist Matthew Piatt; mezzo-soprano Laura Krumm with John Churchwell; baritone Edward Nelson with Robert Mollicone; baritone Efraín Solís with Bryndon Hassman; and bass-baritone Michael Sumuel with Maureen Zoltek. Elena Park and Frazer Bradshaw, co-directors; Frazer Bradshaw, director of photography.

Repertoire for later sessions may include arias and chamber music, featuring musicians of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and guest artists.

NORTH STAGE DOOR

Four-episode podcast series premieres in late March; other release dates will be announced
Free and available at [sfoopera.com](https://www.sfoopera.com)

Step into the world of opera through this new podcast that takes you into the swirl of creativity, stagecraft and performance at San Francisco Opera. Luminaries of the field, including opera stars, composers, directors, writers, craftspeople and musicians from the pit to the stage, will be showcased in this series of four 45-minute episodes.

The pilot episode of *North Stage Door*, premiering in late March, focuses on *The Barber of Seville* in conjunction with the Company's drive-in performances at the Marin Center this April and May. Learn how this familiar work has been specially adapted to meet the demands of these singular times, illustrating how the Company is forging a creative path forward during the pandemic.

Chris Largent, host; Molly McBride and Jennifer Good, executive producers; Elena Park, creative producer; Jeffery McMillan, content editor; Rachel Garoon, coordinating producer; Tod Nixon, audio engineer; Celine Strouts, production coordinator

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OFFICIAL WINE SPONSOR



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PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable photographs, including headshots, for San Francisco Opera's Spring 2021 programming are available at sfopera.com/press

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