



**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA TO PRESENT RICHARD WAGNER'S
THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG JUNE/JULY 2028**



Eun Sun Kim and Francesca Zambello. Photo: Cody Pickens

Music Director Eun Sun Kim will lead Wagner's epic for the first time in director Francesca Zambello's celebrated production including pre-cycle runs of the first two *Ring* operas leading up to the full cycles



Scenes from *The Ring of the Nibelung* in 2018. Photos: Cory Weaver/San Francisco Opera

Cast headed by soprano Tamara Wilson in her Company debut as Brünnhilde, baritone Brian Mulligan as Wotan and Simon O'Neill as Siegfried

sfopera.com/ringcycle

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (November 11, 2025) — At a special event held at the Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera, San Francisco Opera Tad and Dianne Taube General Director **Matthew Shilvock** and Caroline H. Hume Music Director **Eun Sun Kim** announced plans for the Company's upcoming presentation of Richard Wagner's 1876 masterwork *The Ring of the Nibelung* (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) in summer 2028. Shilvock and Kim were joined for the announcement by director **Francesca Zambello** whose staging, a co-production of San Francisco Opera and Washington National Opera, will be remounted for the cycles and baritone **Brian Mulligan** who will portray the role of Wotan.

Wagner's *Ring* cycle, among the most ambitious and intricately crafted works of art in human history, consists of four operas—*Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*—performed over the course of a week, and relating a story of gods, heroes, greed, corruption, love and redemption. Eun Sun Kim will conduct three full cycles of *The Ring of the Nibelung* in 2028 and each of the four music dramas in standalone performances leading up to *Ring* Festival.

Matthew Shilvock said: "San Francisco is a city with an extraordinary Wagnerian tradition. Since 1935, San Francisco Opera has brought to life Wagner's epic journey of the *Ring* with the most exciting artists in the world. I am profoundly grateful to Eun Sun Kim for the journey she is now taking us on, building a new chapter in that storied Wagnerian history. The current triumph she is having with *Parsifal* is a thrilling indication of what is to come in 2028. Eun Sun probes so insightfully into these works, illuminating their humanity in a way that reverberates with audiences at a deep level. Her interpretation will connect so profoundly with Francesca Zambello's spectacular production which encapsulates the immediate connection of Wagner's drama for audiences today. The *Ring* is the story of humanity, and this set of cycles comes at a time when collective story telling is so achingly needed in the world. These cycles will be moments for us to come together as a community, on both sides of the proscenium, and find shared meaning in one of the most awe-inspiring works ever created."

In 2023, Eun Sun Kim began a multi-season initiative to conduct the works of Wagner each season in San Francisco. She started with *Lohengrin*, the preparation for which was captured in the NorCal Emmy-nominated documentary [*Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin*](#), followed by *Tristan und Isolde* in 2024 and this season's new production of *Parsifal*. Praise for these presentations has been expansive. About *Lohengrin*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* said, "Throughout the opera's 4½-hour span, Kim maintained a rhythmic control that was at once propulsive and free." San Francisco Classical Voice said of *Tristan und Isolde*: "Kim commands every page of this daunting and harmonically unsettled score." Kim's leadership of *Parsifal* was hailed by

the *San Francisco Opera Chronicle*: "Under her guidance, the Opera Orchestra mustered the gauzy delicacy that is the distinctive province of parts of the *Parsifal* score, as well as the supercharged orchestral rhetoric that registers as 'Wagnerian' in any context." KQED summarized Kim's Wagner journey: "And can we take a moment to appreciate the gift San Francisco has in Eun Sun Kim at the podium? All the dynamism of the score comes alive under her baton."

Eun Sun Kim remarked: "As we begin preparations for Wagner's *Ring* cycle, I am honored and humbled to share in this feat with the extraordinary musicians comprising San Francisco Opera, my musical home. It is my privilege to have contributed to our incredible history of performing Wagner's magnificent scores since San Francisco Opera's founding seasons, and I am thrilled to plan for its future life. I look forward to engaging in a musical dialogue between the orchestra, singers, audience, and myself, delving into the complex themes of human nature written on every page of Wagner's scores that are both timeless and timely."

Critical and public acclaim for Zambello's production has been widespread since its first presentation as a complete cycle by San Francisco Opera in 2011. The *San Francisco Chronicle* proclaimed, "San Francisco Opera's most ambitious undertaking in years also turned out to be the company's greatest triumph." The 2018 revival introduced improvements and refinements. *Opera* observed, "Over the past seven years, technological advances have generated a new and often immersive series of projections by S. Katy Tucker, and have inspired modifications to Michael Yeargan's décor," while the *San Francisco Chronicle* said, "At every juncture, the human dimension of drama registers with concerted force."

Francesca Zambello commented: "I worked on my first *Ring* cycle 40 years ago, and it's been a recurring soundtrack for my life ever since, coming to mind in times of intense emotion and change. Wagner understood something about the human condition, in all its complexity, and was able to translate that into the most overwhelming musical expression imaginable. Because Wagner's canvas is broad and universal, it has invited generations of artists to bring their own ideas to new productions. As I began to consider a new production in the early days of the 21st century, I found that American iconography offered a compelling road map for Wagner's monumental score. I wanted to focus on humans' historical propensity to destroy the natural world, as well as the role of women—particularly Brünnhilde—to emerge as healers. I believe that Brünnhilde is the true hero of the *Ring*. Her father is seeking a perfect hero, but his idea of a hero is rooted in old ideas, the same ideas that have brought about so much violence and destruction. Fifteen years later, I'm excited to dive back into the production with an extraordinary new cast headed by close colleagues Tammy, Simon and Brian, along with Eun Sun conducting her first *Ring*. Together, we all will discover the work anew in the rehearsal

room, as each artist brings their own human experience to the task of telling this evergreen story."

In preparation for her first *Ring* cycles, Kim will conduct the constituent parts of *The Ring of the Nibelung* leading up to June 2028. She begins the journey with the cycle's prologue, *Das Rheingold*, in June 2027 and with part two, *Die Walküre*, in the fall of 2027. In late spring 2028, she will conduct single performances each of *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* in the weeks before the full cycles begin.

The 2028 *Ring* cycles (with performances on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday) are scheduled for:

CYCLE 1—June 13–18, 2028 | CYCLE 2—June 20–25, 2028 | CYCLE 3—June 27–July 2, 2028



The cast for San Francisco Opera's forthcoming *Ring* will be headed by a trio of exceptional Wagnerian artists. **Tamara Wilson** makes her Company debut as Brünnhilde, the heroine of the *Ring* who appears in *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. The GRAMMY® Award winning soprano appears this season in the new production premieres of *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* at Opéra National de Paris.

Brian Mulligan, who recently earned praise as Telramund in *Lohengrin* and Amfortas in *Parsifal* with the Company, performs Wotan. The American baritone has performed the role in *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* in Europe and Asia, but will perform the full cycle for the first time in San Francisco. No stranger to Zambello's production, Mulligan appeared in the 2018 performances as Donner (*Das Rheingold*) and Gunther (*Götterdämmerung*).



New Zealand tenor **Simon O'Neill** is one of the world's leading heldentenors. O'Neill starred in the title roles of Wagner's *Lohengrin* and *Tristan und Isolde* under the baton of Eun Sun Kim in recent seasons. In the *Ring*, he will portray Siegfried, the hero in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*.

Additional casting will be announced at a later date.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the 2028 *Ring* cycles will go on sale October 13, 2026 for Ring Circle members—a group of supporters who are invited to make a contribution at levels beginning at \$7,500 and who will enjoy special benefits leading up to and during the cycles—along with subscribers and donors at some levels. *Ring* cycle packages will go on sale to the general public in July 2027. Tickets for the non-cycle performances of *Das Rheingold* will be available to subscribers when the Company's 2026–27 Season is announced in early 2026. Tickets for non-cycle performances of *Die Walküre* in fall 2027 and the one-off performances of *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* in spring 2028 will be available when the Company's 2027–28 is announced in early 2027.

As in prior presentations of the *Ring*, the Company will offer a variety of community programs and ancillary events around the cycles including lectures, symposia and musical performances offering opportunities for community members to delve deeper into Wagner's epic masterpiece. More Ring Festival details will be announced at a later date.

THE RING AT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA



Scenes from San Francisco Opera's history with the *Ring*: *Die Walküre* (1935) with Lauritz Melchior and Kirsten Flagstad; Hunding summons the vassals in *Götterdämmerung* (1972); the gods enter Valhalla in *Das Rheingold* (1985).

San Francisco Opera is among the world's leading presenters of *The Ring of the Nibelung* with a storied history extending back to 1935, the Company's 13th season, with performances featuring legendary artists Kirsten Flagstad as Brünnhilde in her first-ever complete *Ring* cycle, Lauritz Melchior as Siegfried and Friedrich Schorr as Wotan with Artur Bodanzky conducting. Later stagings followed in 1972 for the Company's Golden Jubilee season, a new production by Nikolaus Lehnhoff in 1985, 1990 and 1999 and Zambello's production in 2011 and 2018.

ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Under the leadership of Tad and Dianne Taube General Director Matthew Shilvock and Caroline H. Hume Music Director Eun Sun Kim, San Francisco Opera celebrated its Centennial Season in 2022–23. The Company's 103rd season includes the world premiere of [*The Monkey King*](#) by Huang Ruo and David Henry Hwang, a new production of Wagner's [*Parsifal*](#), a 25th-anniversary presentation of Jake Heggie and Terrence McNally's [*Dead Man Walking*](#) (a San Francisco Opera commission in 2000), Verdi's [*Rigoletto*](#), Rossini's [*The Barber of Seville*](#), Strauss' [*Elektra*](#), and a variety of concerts and special events. Learn more at sfopera.com.

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San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by Julie Dickson, Jerome & Thao Dodson, Dagmar Dolby, Bertie Bialek Elliott, The Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation for the Arts, Louise Gund, John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn, Franklin & Catherine Johnson, Edmund W. & Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, Bernard & Barbro Osher, Marieke & Jeff Rothschild, Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem, Dianne & Tad Taube, Diane B. Wilsey, Barbara A. Wolfe, and two anonymous donors.

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



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PRESS PHOTOS: High-resolution, downloadable artist headshots and production images for the *Ring* cycle are available at pressphotos.sfopera.com.

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