



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA PRESENTS MOZART'S *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO*
(*LE NOZZE DI FIGARO*) IN NEW PRODUCTION BY DIRECTOR MICHAEL CAVANAGH
WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE, OCTOBER 11–NOVEMBER 1**

**Beginning of Multi-Year Project to Unveil the Collaborations of
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Lorenzo Da Ponte as a Trilogy
Set in an American Manor House**



The Marriage of Figaro set design by Erhard Rom; costume design by Constance Hoffman; Mozart and Da Ponte Trilogy creative team (from left to right): Jane Cox, Erhard Rom, Constance Hoffman and Michael Cavanagh (©Matthew Washburn/San Francisco Opera)

**Hungarian Conductor Henrik Nánási Returns to Lead International Ensemble Including
Michael Sumuel, Jeanine De Bique, Levente Molnár, Nicole Heaston and Serena Malfi**



Michael Sumuel, Jeanine De Bique, Levente Molnár, Nicole Heaston, Serena Malfi and Henrik Nánási

Tickets available at sfopera.com and (415) 864-3330

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (October 3, 2019) — San Francisco Opera presents Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) in a new production by director Michael Cavanagh at the War Memorial Opera House, October 11–November 1. The production marks the beginning of a multi-year project to weave together Mozart and librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte's three operas—*Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte* and *Don Giovanni*—as a trilogy set within an American manor house during three time periods.

Conductor **Henrik Nánási** leads the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and an international cast in this enduring comic masterpiece.

The Marriage of Figaro had its world premiere in Vienna in 1786 and was the first of the three collaborations by Mozart and Da Ponte. Based on the revolutionary French play by Beaumarchais, the opera features humanist themes, comic situations and a brilliant, tuneful score that continues to move audiences centuries after the first performance. *The Marriage of Figaro* is in the repertory of nearly every opera company and was the first of Mozart's works to be staged by San Francisco Opera (1936).

Canadian director **Michael Cavanagh**, whose San Francisco Opera credits include Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*, John Adams' *Nixon in China* and Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, sets *The Marriage of Figaro* around the time of the opera's composition, relocating Count Almaviva's palace in Seville to early America. He said, "*The Marriage of Figaro* is all about new beginnings. Our production takes place at the heart of a post-revolutionary America, a world of vast possibility for some, but great resentment and resistance for others. The setting is a house and a nation under construction, representing a hopeful future in which people strive to express their individual freedom within a framework of responsibility to each other."

The production's house setting is designed by **Erhard Rom** who took inspiration from early American structures. Costume designer **Constance Hoffman** clothes the characters in early post-revolutionary fabrics and fashions. **Jane Cox**, whose theatrical work has won acclaim on Broadway, is the lighting designer.

American bass-baritone **Michael Sumuel** made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2011. After turns as Escamillo in Bizet's *Carmen* and Masetto in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, he returns to take on the role of Figaro, the clever servant who must outmaneuver the nobleman of the house before marrying his love. Trinidadian soprano **Jeanine De Bique** makes her San Francisco Opera and role debuts as Figaro's bride-to-be, Susanna. De Bique recently won acclaim in Peter Sellars' production of Mozart's *La Clemenza da Tito* at the Salzburg Festival and the Dutch National Opera and made a recent cameo on the Netflix series *The OA*.

Baritone **Levente Molnár** appears with San Francisco Opera for the first time as Count Almaviva. An artist who achieved acclaim for performances in Munich, London, New York, Zürich and his native Budapest, Molnár recently portrayed the title role of Ferenc Erkel's *Bánk Bán* with the touring Hungarian State Opera. Soprano **Nicole Heaston** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as the Countess, a role she has performed around the world, including at Paris' Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Norwegian Opera, Hungarian National Opera and Boston Lyric Opera. The *Boston Globe* proclaimed her "a radiant Countess, her warm voice carrying hints of wisdom, mischief and sorrow." Italian mezzo-soprano **Serena Malfi**, renowned for her portrayals of Mozart and Rossini heroines at the Metropolitan

Opera, Vienna State Opera and Milan's Teatro alla Scala, brings her "gorgeous, velvety, strong and agile" (*Opera News*) voice to the role of Cherubino for her first engagement with the Company.

The cast also features San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow **Natalie Image** as Barbarina, mezzo-soprano **Catherine Cook** as Marcellina, bass **James Creswell** as Doctor Bartolo, tenor **Greg Fedderly** as Don Basilio, tenor **Brenton Ryan** as Don Curzio and **Bojan Knežević** as Antonio. Following his "unforgettable company debut" (*San Francisco Chronicle*) leading Strauss' *Elektra* in 2017, conductor **Henrik Nánási** returns to the San Francisco Opera podium. Recent engagements for the Hungarian maestro have included Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, the Metropolitan Opera, Munich's Bavarian State Opera and Madrid's Teatro Real. Chorus director **Ian Robertson** prepares the Opera Chorus.

Productions of *Così fan tutte* and *Don Giovanni* will follow *The Marriage of Figaro* in successive seasons to complete the trilogy known as the "Great American House of Mozart and Da Ponte." All three works will feature the creative team of Cavanagh, Rom, Hoffman and Cox. *Così* is scheduled for the 2020–21 Season and takes place in the 1930s, 150 years after *Figaro*, when the same American house has been repurposed as a country club—though the country struggles with economic strife and the winds of war are beginning to stir abroad. Coming in the 2021–22 Season, *Don Giovanni* will be set in a crumbling shell of the house in which the characters struggle to survive an uncertain and anxious future. Casting for these future productions will be announced at a later date.

Sung in Italian with English supertitles, the eight performances of *The Marriage of Figaro* are scheduled for October 11 (7:30 pm), October 13 (2 pm), October 16 (7:30 pm), October 19 (7:30 pm), October 22 (7:30 pm), October 25 (7:30 pm), October 27 (2 pm) and November 1 (7:30 pm), 2019.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets for *The Marriage of Figaro* 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, call (415) 864-3330 or visit the San Francisco Opera Box Office at 301 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco. 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 *The Marriage of Figaro* at the War Memorial Opera House features a 25-minute Pre-Opera Talk by San Francisco Opera Dramaturg Emeritus Kip Cranna. Beginning 55 minutes prior to curtain, Pre-Opera Talks are open to tickets holders for the corresponding performance.

Director
Set Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Choreographer
Chorus Director

Michael Cavanagh
Erhard Rom
Constance Hoffman
Jane Cox*
Lawrence Pech
Ian Robertson

San Francisco Opera Orchestra and San Francisco Opera Chorus

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