



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

2020 SUMMER SEASON CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Opera is ON Launched to Inspire Connection and Community During Time of Social Distancing

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (April 14, 2020) — San Francisco Opera Tad and Dianne Taube General Director Matthew Shilvock announced today that the Company's 2020 Summer Season, scheduled to take place June 7–July 3 at the War Memorial Opera House, has been canceled. Ongoing developments in the global effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including orders by the City of San Francisco to shelter in place through at least May 3, as well as other state and federal travel restrictions and safety measures, prohibit the Company's ability to prepare, build, rehearse and perform this summer.

"Today I am announcing the heartbreaking decision to cancel our 2020 Summer Season due to the current pandemic. The safety and health of our audiences, artists and employees must come first, and it is imperative that we continue to do our part in the critical effort to contain COVID-19," said Shilvock. "I am profoundly grateful to all who have invested so deeply of themselves in planning and preparing for our summer season, and I grieve that so much creative energy will sadly not find expression on our stage this summer. This Company has faced many challenges in its nearly 100 years—our very theater was built from the determination of San Franciscans to bring music back after the devastation of the 1906 earthquake. We have survived the Great Depression, a World War, the Loma Prieta earthquake, the dot-com bust, September 11 and the 2008 recession. I know San Francisco Opera will emerge from this doing what we do best: bringing works of soaring beauty to life and sharing them with our extraordinary community."

The decision to cancel the summer season was made in close consultation with San Francisco Opera Board Chairman John Gunn, San Francisco Opera Association President Keith Geeslin and the Company's board of directors, who held a special meeting on April 10 to review and approve the action. The board has met regularly with management since the initial shelter-in-place order

was issued by San Francisco Mayor London Breed on March 16 and remains deeply committed to the present and future success of the Company.

San Francisco Opera estimates financial losses of \$8 million due to the cancellation of the summer season. The Company will continue to pay full compensation and benefits for employees through the current May 3 shelter-in-place period. "We are in conversation with all eight of our union partners to determine how we can best support our employees during this unprecedented situation," Shilvock stated. "At this time, we are focused on mitigating the devastating impact that cancellations could have on the lives of the artists, musicians, crew members and staff who are the heart of this Company, while also maintaining a strong organization when we return to the stage. I am very grateful to all of our unions for their partnership in working through this very difficult time."

"Arts and culture have the unique ability to provide solace, healing, connection and joy—things we need now more than ever. While we are devastated to cancel the summer season, we remain deeply committed to sharing the cathartic power of opera through our new digital initiative [Opera is ON](#)," Shilvock continued. "The entire Company joins me in expressing profound appreciation to all of the essential and front-line workers who are saving lives, ensuring the safety of our cities and keeping our communities running. We wish everyone health, safety and an optimistic hope for the future as, together, we navigate this crisis."

The 2020 Summer Season was scheduled to include 18 performances of three operas: Verdi's *Ernani* conducted by Caroline H. Hume Music Director Designate Eun Sun Kim, Handel's *Partenope* with multiple artists making American debuts and the Bay Area premiere of Mason Bates and Mark Campbell's *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*. Ancillary activities relating to the mainstage presentations are also canceled, including Bay Area Opera Previews, pre-opera talks and Pride Night at the Opera.

Summer Season ticketholders may contact the San Francisco Opera Box Office to contribute the value of their tickets as a tax-deductible donation, exchange for a currently scheduled future mainstage performance, place the ticket value on account for future mainstage purchases or obtain a full refund. Donations are particularly helpful to San Francisco Opera during this difficult time. The Company extends its gratitude to all its patrons for their understanding and ongoing support. San Francisco Opera's Box Office windows located at 301 Van Ness Avenue remain closed in accordance with the current shelter-in-place order through at least May 3, but the Box Office team is available to assist patrons by phone at (415) 864-3330, Monday 10 am–5 pm and Tuesday–Saturday 10 am–6 pm. Ticket holders may also visit sfopera.com/summer to select their preferred ticketed option.

While the War Memorial Opera House, Diane B. Wilsey Center for Opera and Burlingame Scene Shop have remained closed to San Francisco Opera operations since March 17, Company employees continue to work remotely wherever possible. The San Francisco Opera Chorus is continuing their preparations for the upcoming year through online rehearsals with Chorus Director Ian Robertson, and the resident artists, the Adler Fellows, have been in regular coachings with Music Director Designate Eun Sun Kim through video conferencing.

OPERA IS ON

In order to remain connected with the San Francisco Opera community and provide comfort, beauty and joy during the COVID-19 crisis, the Company has launched *Opera is ON* (sfopera.com/opera-is-on). This online initiative features new and archival content for the public to explore and engage with opera during the shelter in place. While features will be added in the days and weeks ahead, current *Opera is ON* highlights include:

- “Odes to Joy” musical performances by the San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows, with personal dedications (hashtag #OdesToJoy).
- Spotify playlists curated by the Company’s leadership, including General Director Matthew Shilvock, Music Director Designate Eun Sun Kim and Managing Director: Artistic Gregory Henkel.
- Blog articles contributed by members of the orchestra, chorus, production artists and administration.

For more information about *Opera is ON*, bookmark sfopera.com/opera-is-on, and follow San Francisco Opera on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Spotify](#).

Faced with school closures and restrictions on gathering size, the Company’s Department of Diversity, Equity and Community (DEC) is moving its education and outreach efforts online. Its professional development training sessions for teaching artists and classroom teachers are streamed live on Facebook and will be available on demand to educators. Additional online programs and DEC content for *Opera is ON* will be announced at a later date.

San Francisco Opera Guild has also moved many of its award-winning education programs online to continue serving its constituents. Teaching artists and students are meeting and collaborating in the digital space for Book to Bravo!, Voices for Social Justice, Sing a Story, Opera Scouts and Madrigals programs. The Summer Conservatory Opera Camp, currently scheduled to begin July 6, is preparing for online programming if current social distancing measures are extended.

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High-resolution, downloadable photographs of San Francisco Opera's 2020 Summer Season repertory, Opera is ON and online rehearsal images are available at sfopera.com/press.

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