



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA PRESENTS *TRISTAN UND ISOLDE*
War Memorial Opera House, October 19–November 5



Eun Sun Kim; Paul Curran; *Tristan und Isolde* photos: Michele Crosera/Teatro La Fenice

Music Director Eun Sun Kim conducts Richard Wagner's masterwork for the first time in director Paul Curran's production featuring Simon O'Neill, Anja Kampe, Kwangchul Youn, Annika Schlicht, Wolfgang Koch



Simon O'Neill (Tristan), Anja Kampe (Isolde), Kwangchul Youn (King Marke), Annika Schlicht (Brangäne), Wolfgang Koch (Kurwenal)

Tickets available at (415) 864-3330 and [sfopera.com](https://www.sfopera.com)
October 27 performance will be livestreamed

New Film *Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin*
Available October 9 for Free Streaming at [sfopera.com](https://www.sfopera.com) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (September 24, 2024) — San Francisco Opera presents Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (*Tristan and Isolde*) from October 19–November 5 under the baton of Caroline H. Hume Music Director Eun Sun Kim who leads this monumental work

for the first time. **Paul Curran** makes his Company debut directing his production from Venice's Teatro La Fenice which features renowned Wagnerian interpreters **Simon O'Neill** and **Anja Kampe** in the title roles. In connection with the performances, the Company announces the release of a new film, *Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin*, on October 9 which takes viewers backstage during rehearsals for the Company's 2023 performances of Wagner's *Lohengrin* led by Maestro Kim.

Rooted in medieval legend, *Tristan und Isolde* is about a love that transcends all, even death itself. Though Wagner finished work on his score in 1859, the work was not performed until 1865 due to its musical complexity and titanic scale which led some to declare it unperformable. A keystone of the repertoire, *Tristan und Isolde* calls for the orchestra and vocal soloists to sustain the sensual yearnings expressed in the work to ecstatic extremes, from the enigmatic "Tristan Chord" in the opera's first 15 seconds to Isolde's climactic "Liebestod" ("Love Death") more than four hours later.

Taking on Wagner's score for the first time, **Eun Sun Kim** continues her initiative to conduct major operas by two of the art form's most important forebears, Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner, each season. The *San Francisco Chronicle* praised last season's performances of an early Wagnerian masterpiece: "*Lohengrin*, with its long-breathed, fluid melodies and shimmery instrumental world, is the most italianate of the composer's works, and Kim and the orchestra caught that character perfectly ... The radiant orchestral prelude that opens the piece seemed to blossom from thin air." Earlier this year, Kim led Wagner's final opera, *Parsifal*, with Houston Grand Opera about which *Opera* observed, "... she was in total control of the magical score's flow surges, hesitations, mystery and majesty." Her 2024–25 Season in San Francisco also includes Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* (onstage through September 27), a sold-out performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, honoring the work's 200th anniversary, on October 26 and Mozart's early masterpiece *Idomeneo* in June 2025.

Acclaimed Scottish director **Paul Curran** joins San Francisco Opera to direct his production of *Tristan und Isolde* which premiered in Venice in 2012. **Robert Innes Hopkins**, well known to San Francisco Opera audiences for his sets and costumes for recent stagings of Puccini's *Tosca*, Verdi's *La Traviata*, and last season's *L'Elisir d'Amore* by Donizetti, is the production designer and **David Martin Jacques**, bowing with the Company for the first time, is the lighting designer. San Francisco Opera Chorus Director **John Keene** prepares the artists of the Opera Chorus.

Simon O'Neill, who “combined heroic power and clarion phrasing to create a gleaming portrait” (*San Francisco Chronicle*) in *Lohengrin* with the Company last season, returns as the titular knight, Tristan. The New Zealand native and former Merola Opera Program participant is today hailed as one of the world’s leading heldentenors, or tenors who regularly perform the heroic roles in Wagner’s operas which require extraordinary endurance, range and artistry.

German soprano **Anja Kampe** made her San Francisco Opera debut in 2011 as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* in the Company’s co-production of Wagner’s *Ring* cycle by director Francesca Zambello. She returns this season as Isolde, one of the most prized roles in the soprano repertoire, which she has performed with the Vienna State Opera, Munich’s Bavarian State Opera, Berlin’s State Opera and at Buenos Aires’ Teatro Colón. Of Kampe’s debut at the Metropolitan Opera in Wagner’s *Der Fliegende Holländer*, the *New York Times* said, “Her singing was plush and warm, with lyrical sheen in tender phrases and steely intensity when Senta’s obsession takes hold.”

Korean bass **Kwangchul Youn** takes on the role of King Marke, the betrayed monarch. Youn first appeared with San Francisco Opera last summer as Sarastro in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* under Maestro Kim’s leadership. A celebrated interpreter in the Wagnerian repertoire, Youn has performed in many seasons at the Festspielhaus, Wagner’s home theater in Bayreuth, receiving praise in *Parsifal* for providing “a superbly resonant and authoritative foundation for the drama” (*Opera*).

Annika Schlicht makes her U.S. opera debut as Brangäne, Isolde’s confidant whose mishandling of potions in Act I is a catalyst for Tristan and Isolde’s love affair. Schlicht recently performed Brangäne with Deutsche Oper Berlin, a company where she has performed in a variety of Wagner works including the *Ring* cycle (Fricka and Waltraute), *Rienzi* (Adriano) and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Magdalene). Bass-baritone **Wolfgang Koch** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Tristan’s attendant, Kurwenal, for which *Opera* hailed his “agile, incisive” interpretation.

Tenor **Christopher Oglesby** sings the dual roles of a Sailor (Act I) and the Shepherd (Act III), and current San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows **Thomas Kinch** and **Samuel Kidd** are Melot and the Steersman, respectively.

Sung in German with English supertitles, the five performances of *Tristan und Isolde* are scheduled for October 19 (6 p.m.), 23 (6 p.m.), 27 (1 p.m.); November 1 (6 p.m.), 5 (6 p.m.), 2024.

LIVESTREAM: *Tristan und Isolde*, Sunday, October 27 at 1 p.m.

The Sunday, October 27 matinee performance of *Tristan und Isolde* will be livestreamed at 1 p.m. PT. The opera will also be available to watch on demand for 48 hours beginning on Monday, October 28 at 10 a.m. PT. Tickets for the livestream and limited on-demand viewing are \$27.50. For tickets and more information about livestreams, visit sfopera.com/digital.

ANNOUNCING NEW FILM
Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin



Scenes from *Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin*.

San Francisco Opera announces the release of *Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin*, a 60-minute film by San Francisco Opera and Lumahai Productions, the team behind the Company's award-winning *In Song* video portrait series. The new film directed by Elena Park takes viewers behind the scenes and into the rehearsal process for San Francisco Opera's October 2023 presentation of Wagner's *Lohengrin* in the production by David Alden. With Music Director Eun Sun Kim at the helm, the artists and production team meet the challenge of this musical Mount Everest with singers familiar with their roles such as tenor Simon O'Neill (Lohengrin) and bass Kristinn Sigmundsson (King Heinrich) and others who—along with Kim—were taking on *Lohengrin* for the first time, including soprano Julie Adams (Elsa), mezzo-soprano Judit Kutasi (Ortrud) and baritone Brian Mulligan (Telramund).

The film will be released on October 9 and available for free streaming at sfopera.com and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) in English with optional Korean subtitles.

ANCILLARY EVENTS

WAGNER SOCIETY OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DIRECTORS IN CONVERSATION

Green Room, Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Avenue, Second Floor, San Francisco

Director Paul Curran on *Tristan und Isolde*

Monday, October 14 at 7 p.m.

With the premiere of San Francisco Opera's production of *Tristan und Isolde* approaching, the Wagner Society of Northern California hosts director Paul Curran in this free preview discussion. For more information and to register, visit wagnersf.org/events/director-paul-curran-on-tristan-und-isolde.

Francesca Zambello on *Tannhäuser*

Monday, October 28 at 7 p.m.

Director Francesca Zambello joins the Wagner Society of Northern California for a free preview of her production of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* for Houston Grand Opera in April/May 2025. Zambello also directs San Francisco Opera's production of *Carmen* this fall, opening November 13. For more information and to register for the *Tannhäuser* discussion, visit wagnersf.org/events/francesca-zambello-on-directing-wagner-and-her-upcoming-tannhauser-in-houston.

PRE-OPERA TALKS

Conductor and music historian Peter Susskind will provide a 25-minute overview of the opera 55 minutes prior to each performance in the Opera House auditorium for ticketholders. An audio recording of the talk will be available at sfopera.com/operas/tristan-and-isolde.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets for *Tristan und Isolde* range from \$28 to \$426 and are available at the San Francisco Box Office by calling (415) 864-3330 and online at sfopera.com. San Francisco Opera Box Office hours are Monday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m.–6 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (Saturdays phone only). A \$2 per-ticket facility fee is included in Balcony 1, 2 and 3 zone prices; all other zones include a \$3 per-ticket facility fee.

Tickets for the October 27 livestream of *Tristan und Isolde* are \$27.50. For more information, visit sfopera.com/digital.

The War Memorial Opera House is located at 301 Van Ness Avenue. Patrons are encouraged to use public transportation to attend San Francisco Opera performances. The War Memorial Opera House is within walking distance of the Civic Center BART/Muni Station and near numerous bus lines, including 5, 21, 47, 49 and F Market Street. For further public transportation information, visit bart.gov and sfmta.com.

Gifts of all sizes help create San Francisco Opera's programs and are appreciated. To donate visit sfopera.com/donate.

All casting, programs, schedules and ticket prices are subject to change. For further information about San Francisco Opera's 2024–25 Season, visit sfopera.com.

###

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE CASTING AND CALENDAR

#US Debut *San Francisco Opera Debut †Role Debut

‡Current Adler Fellow ◇Adler Fellowship and Merola Opera Program Graduate +Merola Opera Program Graduate

All performances take place at the War Memorial Opera House (301 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco)

TRISTAN AND ISOLDE by Richard Wagner

October 19 (6 p.m.), 23 (6 p.m.), 27 (1 p.m.); November 1 (6 p.m.), 5 (6 p.m.), 2024

Opera in three acts

Libretto by the composer

San Francisco Opera production originally created by Teatro La Fenice, Venice

Approximate running time: 4 hours and 35 minutes, including two intermissions

Sung in German with English supertitles

World Premiere:	Munich, June 10, 1865
First SFO Performance:	September 16, 1927
Most Recent:	October 2006

Cast:

<i>Tristan</i>	Simon O'Neill ⁺
<i>Isolde</i>	Anja Kampe
<i>King Marke</i>	Kwangchul Youn
<i>Kurwenal</i>	Wolfgang Koch [*]
<i>Brangäne</i>	Annika Schlicht [#]

A Sailor
A Shepherd
Melot
A Steersman

Christopher Oglesby ♪◇
Christopher Oglesby ♪◇
Thomas Kinch ♪‡
Samuel Kidd ♪‡

Creative Team:

Conductor
Director
Production Designer
Lighting Designer
Chorus Director
Fight Director

Eun Sun Kim
Paul Curran *
Robert Innes Hopkins
David Martin Jacques *
John Keene
Dave Maier

San Francisco Opera Orchestra and San Francisco Opera Chorus

San Francisco Opera is sponsored, in part, by Julie Dickson, Jerome & Thao Dodson, The Dolby Family, Bertie Bialek Elliott, Keith & Priscilla Geeslin, Gordon P. Getty, Louise Gund, John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn, Elizabeth B. Jamieson, in memory of Burgess Jamieson, Franklin & Catherine Johnson, Edmund W. & Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Fund, Steven M. Menzies, Bernard & Barbro Osher, Barbara Oshman, Jeff & Marieke Rothschild, Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem, Dianne & Tad Taube, Phyllis C. Wattis Endowment Funds, Diane B. Wilsey, Barbara A. Wolfe and Anonymous.

Tristan and Isolde is made possible, in part, by Barbara A. Wolfe, Dr. & Mrs. William M. Coughran, John A. & Cynthia Fry Gunn, Bernard & Barbro Osher and Anonymous.

Annika Schlicht's appearance is made possible by a gift to the Emerging Stars Fund by Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem.

San Francisco Opera livestreams are made possible, in part, by George and Leslie Hume.

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



San Francisco Opera is a member of



PRESS PHOTOS: Artist headshots and production images for *Tristan und Isolde* and *Eun Sun Kim: A Journey Into Lohengrin* are available at sfopera.com/press.

For further press information, please contact San Francisco Opera Communications:

Julia Inouye (415) 565-6430 / jinouye@sfopera.com

Jeffery McMillan (415) 565-6451 / jmcmillan@sfopera.com

Teresa Concepcion (415) 565-6470 / tconcepcion@sfopera.com