

HAUTE AMBASSADOR

# SAN FRANCISCO OPERA OPENS 91ST SEASON

BY OLIVIA HSU DECKER



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**T**HE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA OPENED ITS 91ST SEASON IN EARLY September with a glittering Opera Ball and the performance of Arrigo Boito's *Mefistofele* by American soprano Patricia Racette, Russian bass Ildar Abdrazakov and tenor Ramon Vargas.

The theme of the 2013 Opening Night was *The Garden of Good and Evil* created by celebrity event designer Colin Cowie to reflect the celestial and hellish story of Faust and Mefistofele. This event also opens the San Francisco's arts, culture and philanthropic season. Opera Ball is the main fund-raising event for the San Francisco Opera Guild's education and community programs. The co-chairs Ann Girard and Mai Shiver did a great job, as the tickets (priced at \$1,000, \$1,500, \$2,500 and \$5,000) were sold-out weeks before the event.

The Opening Night festivities started with a cocktail reception and dinner at City Hall followed by the performance at the War Memorial Opera House and after-party dancing back at City Hall. SF Opera's General Director David Gockley and Music Director Nicola Luisotti had many people to thank—including the production sponsor John and Cynthia Fry Gunn, the Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey, The Thomas Tilton Production Fund and Thomas F. & Barbara A. Wolfe and production supporter Jan Shrem & Maria Manetti Shrem.

The Opening Night performance was also lovingly dedicated to the memory of Jeannik Mequet Littefield, who provided distinguished support and leadership for the San Francisco Opera. She sponsored 18 productions between 1999 and 2013 after served as board member from 1977 to 1992 and in 2006, she made a \$35 million donation to the SF Opera. "We are saddened by her passing, but we take comfort in celebrating her love for this company, and in knowing that she leaves a legacy that will be felt for years to come," remarked David Gockley.



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- 1. Mai Shiver, Colin Cowie, Ann Girard.
- 2. Karen Kubin, Paul Pelosi, Nancy Pelosi.
- 3. Ann Girard, David Gockley.
- 4. Keith Geeslin, Clark Winslow, Sharon Winslow, Cynthia Gunn, John Gunn.
- 5. Anne Laury, Jorge Maumer, Roberta Sherman, Eileen Blumbourgade.
- 6. Tad Taube, Dianne Taube.
- 7. Christine Belanger, Olivia Decker.
- 8. Romana Bracco, Alan Morrell, Mary Poland.
- 9. George Shultz, Cynthia Gunn, Keith Geeslin, Charlotte Shultz, John Gunn.
- 10. Deepa Pakiamathan in a head gear by Alexander McQueen and gown by Andrew Ng.
- 11. Dede Wilsey.
- 12. Barbara Brookins-Schneider, Jan Shrem, Maria Manetti Shrem.
- 13. Alexis Traina, Trevor Traina.
- 14. Zachary Bogue, Marissa Mayer.

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