

A Night at the Opera Songs and Style

By Olivia Hsu Decker / Photography by Drew Alitzer

In lieu of this fashion-themed *Haute Living* edition, I realized that the San Francisco Opera Opening and Opera Ball were the perfect opportunities to kill two birds with one stone—I can cover both luxury events (my usual column) and style. After all, fashion without events is like a girl all dressed up and nowhere to show! What better occasion for ladies to dress up in their best gowns than at the Opera Ball?

San Francisco Opera's 88th Season opened September 10 with the fabulous production of Verdi's *Aida* with music director Nicola Luisotti. The opening night festivities included cocktails and dinner at City Hall, *Aida* at the War Memorial Opera House, and an after party of dessert and dancing. British designer Zandra Rhodes created the magnificent costumes and brilliant stage sets for the dramatic *Aida*. Equally magnificent and dramatic off stage were the gowns on the ladies. Featured here are just a few that caught my eyes, but there were hundreds of beautiful ladies and gowns at the city's most coveted affair. As a board member of Opera Guild that organizes this annual fund-raising event for SF Opera's education fund, I hope you will support us and come to the Ball year after year!

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THE CITY HALL ROTUNDA HAD AN EGYPTIAN-THEMED DECOR FOR THE OPERA BALL.



OLIVIA HSU DECKER IN UGO ZALDI

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CHARLOTTE SHULTZ IN A WILD RALPH PUCCI SHE SAID SHE NEVER THOUGHT OF WEARING, BUT IT LOOKS FUN AND YOUNG ON HER.



AMBER MARIE BENTLEY DONS A LADY GAGA LOOK-A-LIKE GOWN THAT HAS BATTERY OPERATED NEON LIGHTS, DESIGNED BY JUSTYNA FIUK.



SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI IN A BLACK ARMANI WITH HUSBAND PAUL AND OPERA GENERAL DIRECTOR DAVID GOCKLEY.



ZEM JOAQUIN IN A VINTAGE BOB MACKIE. THE DRESS AND CLUTCH ARE BOTH FROM TORSO VINTAGES COUTURE.



OPERA BALL HONORARY CHAIRWOMAN DEDE WILSEY IS STUNNING IN A OSCAR DE LA RENTA THAT MATCHES HER MAGNIFICENT DIAMOND NECKLACE.



ISHA ABDULLAH WEARS A SAPPHIRE BLUE UNGARO FROM THE NEW COLLECTION. HER HUSBAND, ASIM, OWNS UNGARO!



DOROTHY PAIGE POSES IN AN EXQUISITE OSCAR DE LA RENTA WITH HER HUSBAND, KEN.



PAUL PELOSI POSES WITH AFSANEH AKHTARI IN HER ROBERTO CAVALLI GREEN GOWN.



ADRIANNA POPE SULLIVAN WITH HER HUSBAND, BOB; HER OUTFIT WAS A COSTUME FROM THE OPERA *BARBER OF SEVILLE* BY DUTCH DESIGNER JEAN LOUIS.



VICTORIA YEAGER SAWYER IN A GORGEOUS GOWN WITH BEADS AND FEATHERS BY LILY SAMI.



OPERA BALL 2010 CO-CHAIR MARY POLAND WEARS AN AIDA-INSPIRED GOWN BY LILY SAMI.



BECKY ROBERTS-ASCHER WEARS A RED OSCAR DE LA RENTA ORGANZA GOWN.



OPERA BALL ASSOCIATE CHAIRWOMAN SALLIE HUNTING IN AN EGYPTIAN STYLE GOWN BY COLLEEN QUEN AND NECKLACE BY MASHA ARCHER.



SANDRA GO SHOWS OFF AN ENSEMBLE BY VICTOR TUNG COUTURE.