

Friday, May 17, 2013, 8pm  
Zellerbach Hall

## San Francisco Opera Orchestra

Nicola Luisotti, *conductor*

*with*

Giuseppe Albanese, *piano*

### PROGRAM

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) *Capriccio Sinfonico* (1883)

Nino Rota (1911–1979) Piano Concerto in C major (1959–1962)

Allegro cantabile  
Arietta con variazione  
Allegro

Giuseppe Albanese, *piano*

### INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90 (1882–1883)

Allegro con brio  
Andante  
Poco allegretto  
Allegro

*Nicola Luisotti's appearance is made possible by Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem,  
Chairs, Amici di Nicola of Camerata.*

#### SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

David Gockley, *General Director*  
Nicola Luisotti, *Music Director*

*Cal Performances' 2012–2013 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*

### Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) *Capriccio Sinfonico*

*Composed in 1883. Premiered on July 14, 1883, in Milan, conducted by Franco Faccio.*

Giacomo Puccini's father, Michele, the organist at Lucca Cathedral, died when the lad was five, and Mama Albina struggled for years thereafter to raise her brood of eight. When Giacomo's exceptional talent and ambition for composition soared beyond the means of the family's budget to provide training, Albina successfully imprompted an old acquaintance, a Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Margherita, to intercede with her mistress for a government grant to allow Giacomo to enter the Milan Conservatory. Albina then cajoled the remainder of the needed funds from her uncle, a physician named Niccolo Cerù, and Puccini entered the school in 1880, receiving the highest possible scores on his entrance exams. When the Queen's stipend expired after a year, sufficient additional money was pried from Uncle Niccolo to enable Puccini to complete the course of study by the summer of 1883, a year earlier than the rigorous curriculum usually allowed. For the required graduation exercise, Puccini determined to produce not the usual academic fugues and arias, but a grand orchestral work, a *Symphonic Caprice*, which would both justify the family's faith in him and establish his name in the world of music. "I felt inspired," he later told his biographer Arnaldo Fraccaroli. "I composed at home, in the street, in class, at the Osteria Aida or at the Excelsior of good old Signor Gigi, where one ate without the silly pretence of being able to pay for it; I wrote on odd sheets, bits of paper, and the margins of newspapers." Puccini showed this jumble of jottings to his teacher, the respected Amilcare Ponchielli, who lamented, "I can't make anything of it. It's just a mess." Plans to perform the work at the student concert of July 14th proceeded, however, and Puccini managed to produce a legible score and set of parts by the submission deadline.

The celebrated Franco Faccio, a graduate of the Milan Conservatory and music director of La Scala since 1871 (Verdi chose him to lead both

the first Italian performance of *Aida* and the world premiere of *Otello*), had agreed to conduct the concert, and the rehearsals went well, despite the difficulty of the unfamiliar music for the student players. The performance was a success, and the *Capriccio Sinfonico* created a sensation. Ponchielli was disabused of his earlier estimate of the piece, and he wrote to Albina Puccini that very evening to report on the enthusiastic reception of the work and to predict a brilliant career or later receive them. In time, your son will achieve his just reward. Remember, with faith and courage, the Way of the Cross becomes the Way of the Resurrection." The morning after the premiere, the influential critic Filippo Filippi praised the young composer in the newspaper *La Perseveranza*: "Puccini has won the favor of the general public. He unquestionably possesses the rare essentials of a symphonic composer. I am certain he would be equally successful in the vocal field and in dramatic expression, but his orchestral composition contains so much unity of style, personality, character, and brilliant technique as is rarely found among the most mature composers." (Filippi was right about Puccini's theatrical potential, wrong about his symphonic inclination. *Capriccio Sinfonico* is one of just a handful of non-operatic works by Puccini, which otherwise include an early Mass, a small setting of the Requiem text, a motet for soprano, a cantata, three brief orchestral scores, seven songs, and a few pieces for string quartet and for piano.) On July 16th, Puccini received the Conservatory's little bronze medal recognizing his graduation. Though Faccio's plan to give the *Capriccio Sinfonico* its first professional performance at La Scala never materialized, he did conduct it twice to considerable acclaim at an exhibition in Turin in 1884. A piano-duet version of the score was published in Milan by Giovannina Lucca that same year, but then the work dropped from sight, and was apparently not performed again during Puccini's lifetime, though he did mine two of its themes for inclusion in *Edgar* and *La Bohème*. (He later "borrowed" the score from the Conservatory library and refused to return it for years in an

apparent attempt to conceal this musical shuffling.) Puccini persevered through the next decade, composing two operas (*Le Villi* and *Edgar*) which earned only modest success and even less money, but he was taken on by the powerful publisher Giulio Ricordi, and finally achieved the acclaim that Ponchielli had prophesied for him with the premiere of *Manon Lescaut* in 1893.

The passion and richness of sonority that mark the *Capriccio Sinfonico* (and the rest of Puccini's work, for that matter) are evident in the opening measures, a dramatic proclamation for full wind choir. The quieter moments that ensue contain several fine melodic ideas indicating that Puccini's lyrical gifts were already highly developed during his student years. (One of these themes was borrowed for the choral Requiem in Act III of *Edgar* of 1889.) The *Capriccio's* fast-tempo central section is launched by the vigorous motive that Puccini reused extensively in *La Bohème* a dozen years later; the episode is filled out with lilting waltz music sprung from the principal theme. The mood and music of the introduction return to round out this attractive and highly skilled creation of Puccini's early maturity.

#### Nino Rota (1911–1979) Piano Concerto in C major

*Composed in 1959–1962. Premiered on December 12, 1987, in Rome by the RAI Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Günther Neuhold, with Aldo Ciccolini as soloist.*

The Oscar-winning score for *The Godfather II* and the love theme for Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 *Romeo and Juliet* brought him his widest recognition, but Nino Rota was a fully rounded musician with rich and varied talents: a gifted and prolific composer for the opera house, concert hall, theater, and cinema; a skilled pianist and conductor; a dedicated teacher; and the director of one of Italy's leading conservatories. Rota was born in 1911 into an artistic family in Milan and began studying music as a child with his mother, the daughter of concert pianist

Giovanni Rinaldi. Nino was composing by age eight, and by twelve he had completed an oratorio titled *L'infanzia [Childhood] di San Giovanni Battista*, whose performance established him as a child prodigy; he was admitted to the Milan Conservatory later that year to study privately with the school's director, Ildebrando Pizzetti. In 1926 Rota entered the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome as a student of Alfredo Casella, and when he graduated in 1930 Arturo Toscanini, recently appointed music director of the New York Philharmonic, helped arrange a scholarship for him to study composition with Rosario Scalero and conducting with Fritz Reiner at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Rota profited greatly during his two years in America, not just from the formal curriculum at Curtis but also from his newly forged friendships with Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, and other leading American musicians, his immersion in this country's popular music and, perhaps most influentially, his first experience with talking pictures. He began to establish a reputation as a composer with a number of chamber and orchestral works soon after returning to Italy in 1932, but he also continued his education by earning a degree in music history and literature from the University of Milan. After graduating in 1937, Rota accepted a teaching job in the southern coastal city of Taranto, located where the instep meets the heel of the Italian boot, and two years later moved an hour north to join the faculty of the Bari Conservatory; he was named the school's director in 1950 and retained that position until two years before his death, in Rome in 1979.

Though he was active during one of the most stylistically adventurous periods in the history of music, Rota largely held to traditional forms and idioms in his works, a quality that not only shaped his many compositions for the stage and concert hall—twelve operas, six ballets, oratorios, cantatas, orchestral scores, concertos, incidental music, chamber and piano pieces—but also suited him particularly well to writing for film. He composed his first movie score (*Treno Popolare*—"People's Train") in 1933, and in 1942 signed with the Lux Film Company in Rome,

which became a leading studio following World War II by nurturing such gifted filmmakers as Carlo Ponti, Dino De Laurentiis, Michelangelo Antonioni, and a young screenwriter with ambitions to direct: Federico Fellini. Lux gave Fellini his chance in 1952, when he wrote and directed *Lo Sciecco Bianco* ("The White Sheik") and recruited Rota to supply the score. Fellini and Rota went on to create one of cinema's most enduring and productive collaborations with *La Strada*, *La Dolce Vita*, *Boccaccio*, *8½*, *Juliet of the Spirits*, *Satyricon*, *The Orchestra Rehearsal*, and nine other movies, which the director's biographer Tullio Kezich said was characterized by "empathy, irrationality, and magic." Rota scored nearly 150 other films, working with such prominent directors as Renato Castellani, Luchino Visconti, Franco Zeffirelli, Mario Monicelli, King Vidor, and René Clément, but he enjoyed his greatest success with Francis Ford Coppola in the first two *Godfather* movies—the score for *Part I* was nominated for an Academy Award, but had to be withdrawn when it was learned that Rota had borrowed from his music for the 1958 *Fortunella* (reference, even quotation, was an integral part of his technique); *Part II* won an Oscar. Despite the great diversity of his work, Rota said that it was all written to fulfill his simple creative philosophy: "I'd do everything I could to give everyone a moment of happiness. That's what's at the heart of my music."

Rota composed eleven solo concertos: three for cello, three for piano, and one each for trombone, violin, horn, bassoon, and harp, as well as a concerto for strings and one for orchestra. The C major Piano Concerto was written in 1959–1962, but not premiered until Aldo Ciccolini and conductor Günther Neuhold performed it in Rome with the Italian Radio Symphony Orchestra on December 12, 1987. The work opens with the piano's presentation of the main theme, which comprises the most basic of musical motives—a simple repeated pitch used as a unifying element throughout the movement—and a gracefully arched phrase. Flute and violins repeat the theme, and then the flute offers a descending motive in dotted rhythms that leads to the contrasting second subject, a rowdy melody

perfectly suited to a Keystone Kops car chase. (Rota had scored more than a hundred movies before he wrote this Concerto.) A third theme, built from short, wide-ranging phrases in snapping, dotted rhythms reminiscent of the flute's earlier descending transition motive, is initiated by the piano. The development takes as its material the repeated-note main theme, in both a fanfare-like transformation and its original form, and the snapping-rhythm motive. Main and second themes return intact in the recapitulation before the movement is rounded out by an extended solo cadenza and a brilliant coda based on a quick-tempo version of the main theme.

The second movement is set of variations on a wistful *Ariette* whose melodic eccentricities are actually ingenious aural markers that help to orient the listener as the theme evolves. The mood and material of the finale are established by a mercurial theme of *opera buffa* jocularly announced at the outset by the piano. The only significant interruptions of the movement's headlong progress are a meditative version of the theme given by the piano and a virtuosic cadenza near the end. This infectious and too-little-performed Concerto closes with a rousing romp through its final pages.

#### Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90

*Composed in 1882–1883. Premiered on December 2, 1883, in Vienna, conducted by Hans Richter.*

Brahms had reached the not inconsiderable age of 43 before he unveiled his First Symphony. The Second Symphony followed within 18 months, and the musical world was prepared for a steady stream of similar masterworks from his pen. However, it was to be another six years before he undertook his Third Symphony, though he did produce the *Academic Festival* and *Tragic* overtures, the Violin Concerto, and the Second Piano Concerto during that time. When he got around to the new symphony, he was nearly 50, and had just recovered from a spell of feeling that he was "too old" for creative work, even

informing his publisher, Simrock, that he would be sending him nothing more. It seems likely—though such matters always remained in the shadows where Brahms was concerned—that his creative juices were stirred anew by a sudden infatuation with “a pretty Rhineland girl.” This was Hermine Spiess, a contralto of excellent talent who was 26 when Brahms first met her in January 1883 at the home of friends. (Brahms was 50.) A cordial, admiring friendship sprang up between the two, but this affair, like every other one in Brahms’s life in which a respectable woman was involved, never grew any deeper. He used to declare, perhaps only half in jest, that he lived his life by two principles, “and one of them is never to attempt either an opera or a marriage.” Perhaps what he really needed was a muse rather than a wife. At any rate, Brahms spent the summer of 1883 not in his usual haunts among the Austrian hills and lakes, but at the German spa of Wiesbaden, which just happened to be the home of Hermine. Work went well on the new symphony, and it was completed before he returned to Vienna in October.

More than just an attractive girl was on Brahms’s mind in 1883, however. He had recently suffered the deaths of several close friends, including his dear teacher, Marxsen, and he was feuding with the violinist Joseph Joachim, who had been a champion of his music for thirty years. Many cross-currents of emotion therefore impinged upon the Third Symphony, though Brahms certainly had no specific program in mind for the work. It has nevertheless been called his “Eroica” (by Hans Richter and Eduard Hanslick), a forest idyll (Clara Schumann), a rendering of the Greek legend of Hero and Leander (Joachim), a depiction of the statue of *Germania* at Rüdeshheim (Max Kalbeck), and of a young, heroic Bismarck (Richard Specht). It is all of these, at least to these individuals, but, more importantly, it is really none of these or any other specifically non-musical subject, because this Third Symphony of Brahms is the pinnacle of the pure, abstract symphonic art that stretched back more than a century to Haydn and Mozart. It is a work of such supreme mastery of all the musical elements that it is a

distillation of an almost infinite number of emotional states, not one of which can be adequately rendered in words. “When I look at the Third Symphony of Brahms,” lamented the English master Sir Edward Elgar, “I feel like a tinker.”

When the Third Symphony first appeared, it was generally acclaimed as Brahms’s best work in the form, and perhaps the greatest of all his compositions, despite well-organized attempts by the Wagner cabal to disrupt the premiere. Critical opinion has changed little since. This, the shortest of the four symphonies, is the most clear in formal outline, the most subtle in harmonic content and the most assured in contrapuntal invention. No time is wasted in establishing the conflict that charges the first movement with dynamic energy. The two bold opening chords juxtapose bright F major and a somber chromatic harmony in the opposing moods of light and shadow that course throughout the work. The main theme comes from the strings “like a bolt from Jove,” according to Olin Downes, with the opening chords repeated by the woodwinds as its accompaniment. Beautifully directed chromatic harmonies—note the bass line, which always carries the motion to its close- and long-range goals—lead to the pastoral second theme, sung softly by the clarinet. The development section is brief, but includes elaborations of most of the motives from the exposition. The tonic key of F is re-established, not harmonically but melodically (again the bass leads the way), and the golden chords of the opening proclaim the recapitulation. A long coda based on the main theme reinforces the tonality and discharges much of the music’s energy, allowing the movement to close quietly, as do, most unusually, all the movements of this Symphony.

The second and third are the most intimate and personal movements found anywhere in Brahms’s orchestral output. A simple, folk-like theme appears in the rich colors of the low woodwinds and low strings to open the second movement. The central section of the movement is a Slavic-sounding plaint intoned by clarinet and bassoon that eventually gives way to the flowing rhythms of the opening and the return of the folk theme supported by a new, rippling string

accompaniment. Edward Downes noted about this lovely *Andante* that its “almost Olympian grace and poise recall the spirit if not the letter of Mozart.” The romantic third movement replaces the usual scherzo. It is ternary in form, like the preceding movement, and utilizes the warmest tone colors of the orchestra.

The finale begins with a sinuous theme of brooding character. A brief, chant-like processional derived from the Slavic theme of the second movement provides contrast. Further thematic material is introduced (one theme is arch-shaped; the other, more rhythmically vigorous) and well examined. Brahms dispensed here with a true development section, but combined its function with that of the recapitulation as a way of tightening the structure. As the end of the movement nears, the tonality returns to F major, and there is a strong sense of struggle passed. The tension subsides, and the work ends with the ghost of the opening movement’s main theme infused with a sunset glow.

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## SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ORCHESTRA

Nicola Luisotti, *Music Director, Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair*  
 Patrick Summers, *Principal Guest Conductor*  
 Giuseppe Finzi, *Resident Conductor*

**FIRST VIOLIN**

Kay Stern, *Concertmaster*  
 Laura Albers, *Associate Concertmaster*  
 Heidi Wilcox, *Assistant Concertmaster*  
 Jennifer Cho  
 Dawn Harms  
 Mariya Borozina  
 Lev Rankov<sup>†</sup>  
 Barbara Riccardi  
 Robert Galbraith<sup>†</sup>  
 Leonid Igudesman  
 Asuka Annie Yano  
 Alexandros Sakarellos<sup>‡</sup>  
 Wenyi Shih<sup>‡</sup>  
 Joseph Edelberg<sup>‡</sup>

**SECOND VIOLIN**

Virginia Price-Kvistad, *Principal*  
 Martha Simonds, *Associate Principal*  
 Beni Shinohara, *Assistant Principal*  
 Eva Karasik  
 Leslie Ludena  
 Gerard Svazlian  
 Linda Deutsch Twohy  
 Craig Reiss

**VIOLA**

Carla Maria Rodrigues, *Principal*  
 Sergey Rakitchenkov, *Associate Principal*  
 Paul Nahhas, *Assistant Principal*  
 Patricia Heller  
 Jonna Hervig  
 Natalia Vershilova  
 Joy Fellows

**CELLO**

David Kadarauch, *Principal*  
 Thalia Moore, *Associate Principal*  
 David Budd, *Assistant Principal*  
 Nora Pirquet  
 Emil Miland  
 Victoria Ehrlich  
 Ruth Lane

**DOUBLE BASS**

Joseph Lescher, *Principal*  
 Jonathan Lancelle, *Associate Principal*  
 Steven D'Amico, *Assistant Principal*  
 Shinji Eshima  
 Mark Drury

**FLUTE**

Julie McKenzie, *Principal*  
 Patricia Farrell  
 Stephanie McNab

**PICCOLO**

Stephanie McNab

**OBOE**

Mingjia Liu, *Principal*  
 Deborah Henry, *Assistant Principal*  
 Janet Popesco Archibald

**ENGLISH HORN**

Janet Popesco Archibald

**CLARINET**

Jose Gonzalez Granero, *Principal*  
 Joanne Burke Eisler, *Assistant Principal*  
 Anthony Striplen

**BASS CLARINET**

Anthony Striplen

**BASSOON**

Rufus Olivier, *Principal*  
 Daniel MacNeill  
 Robin Elliott<sup>†</sup>  
 Shawn Jones<sup>‡</sup>

**CONTRABASSOON**

Robin Elliott<sup>†</sup>  
 Shawn Jones<sup>‡</sup>

**HORN**

William Klingelhofer, *Co-Principal*  
 Kevin Rivard, *Co-Principal*  
 Keith Green  
 Brian McCarty  
 Lawrence Ragent

**TRUMPET**

Adam Luftman, *Principal*  
 William Holmes  
 John Pearson

**TROMBONE**

McDowell Kenley, *Principal*  
 Donald Kennelly  
 David Ridge

**TUBA & CIMBASSO**

Zachariah Spellman

**TIMPANI**

John Burgardt

**PERCUSSION**

Richard Kvistad, *Principal/Associate Timpani*  
 Patricia Niemi

**HARP**

Olga Rakitchenkov

**LIBRARIAN**

Carrie Weick  
 Timothy Spears, *Assistant*

**ORCHESTRA MANAGER**

Tracy Davis  
 Timothy Spears, *Assistant*

<sup>†</sup> Leave of absence  
<sup>‡</sup> Season substitute

**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA** has stood at the forefront of the world's great opera companies for nearly nine decades. Gaetano Merola led the Company from its founding in 1923 and Kurt Herbert Adler headed the organization from 1953 through 1981. Legendary for both their conducting and managerial skills, these two leaders established a formidable institution that is heralded for its first-rate productions and roster of international opera stars. Following Adler's vision, the Company was headed by three visionary leaders: Terence A. McEwen, Lotfi Mansouri, and Pamela Rosenberg.

David Gockley became San Francisco Opera's sixth general director in 2006 after more than three decades at the helm of Houston Grand Opera. During his first months as general director, Mr. Gockley took opera to the center of the community with a free outdoor simulcast of *Madama Butterfly*. The subsequent ten simulcasts throughout the Bay Area, including seven at San Francisco's AT&T Park, have collectively drawn nearly 200,000 opera fans. These simulcasts are made possible by the Company's Koret-Taube Media Suite. Founded in 2007, it is the first permanent high-definition video production facility installed in any American opera house. Mr. Gockley ushered in another first for San Francisco Opera in spring 2008, when the Company presented a series of four operas in movie theaters across the country; these operas, in addition to twelve new titles, are available to theaters and performing arts venues as part of the Company's Grand Opera Cinema Series. In 2007, Mr. Gockley also launched radio partnerships that have returned regular San Francisco Opera broadcasts to the national and international radio airwaves.

San Francisco Opera's first two general directors, Messrs. Merola and Adler, regularly conducted for the first six decades of the Company's history. In 1985, the Company appointed Sir John Pritchard as its first permanent music director, and he was followed by Donald Runnicles in 1992. Italian conductor Nicola Luisotti, one of the opera world's most exciting conductors, became music director in fall 2009. Born and raised in Italy, Mr. Luisotti

made his international debut in 2002 at the Stuttgart State Theater. He has since led productions at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the Metropolitan Opera; Milan's La Scala; the Vienna State Opera; Madrid's Teatro Real; and Paris Opera; among many others. He has also established growing relationships with a number of international orchestras and in 2012 he was appointed as music director of the Teatro San Carlo in Naples.

San Francisco Opera has embodied a spirit of innovation by presenting eleven world premieres since 1961. Under Mr. Gockley's leadership, the Company has added three new operas to that list and continues to present world premieres with three new operas in 2013: *The Secret Garden* by Nolan Gasser and Carey Harrison in a co-production with Cal Performances, *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* by Mark Adamo, and *Dolores Claiborne* by composer Tobias Picker and librettist J. D. McClatchy.

San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Opera Guild annually bring opera and music education programs to more than 60,000 students throughout Northern California. San Francisco Opera's groundbreaking Opera ARIA (Arts Resources in Action) programs work with classrooms and educators in grades K–12 to connect professional artistic and creative elements of opera with classroom curricula. For 70 years, the San Francisco Opera Guild has continued to bring award-winning opera arts in-school programs to children in more than 250 Northern California schools.



Italian conductor **Nicola Luisotti** has been music director of San Francisco Opera since September 2009 and holds the Caroline H. Hume Endowed Chair. In the current season he has already conducted performances of *Rigoletto*, *Lohengrin*, and *Tosca*. This spring he conducts *Così fan tutte* and a concert with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra co-presented with

UC Berkeley's Cal Performances. Mr. Luisotti's other engagements during the 2012–2013 season include a new production of *Nabucco* at Milan's La Scala and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, in addition to concerts with the Orchestre de Paris, La Scala's Filarmonica della Scala, Rome's Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia Orchestra, and the Teatro di San Carlo Orchestra in Naples. In 2012, Mr. Luisotti was appointed music director of the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples; he led Verdi's rarely performed *I Masnadieri* and a concert of Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*. Called "both an original thinker and a great respecter of tradition" by *Opera News*, Mr. Luisotti made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2005 conducting *La Forza del Destino* and has led 16 other productions with the Company. He has garnered enthusiastic praise from both audiences and critics for his work at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the Metropolitan Opera; Paris Opera; the Vienna State Opera; La Scala; Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice; Venice's La Fenice; Munich's Bavarian State Opera; Madrid's Teatro Real; Los Angeles Opera; Toronto's Canadian Opera Company; Seattle Opera; Bologna's Teatro Comunale; and in Tokyo's Suntory Hall. Mr. Luisotti was awarded the 39th Premio Puccini Award in conjunction with the historic 100th anniversary of Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* at the Metropolitan Opera, which he conducted in 2010. Equally at home on the concert stage, Mr. Luisotti served as principal guest conductor of the Tokyo Symphony from 2009 to 2012 and has established growing relationships with the orchestras of London (Philharmonia Orchestra), Genoa, Budapest, Turin, and Munich (Bavarian Radio Orchestra), as well as the Berlin Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, and the Atlanta Symphony. This fall at San Francisco Opera, Mr. Luisotti leads *Mefistofele* and *Falstaff*, as well as a special performance of the Verdi Requiem in celebration of the bicentennial year of the composer's birth.



Italian pianist **Giuseppe Albanese** has appeared as a soloist in the world's premier concert venues and makes his Northern California debut with a work he has performed in Rome and Naples. His recent engagements include Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 at Madrid's Teatro Real; Martucci's Piano Concerto No. 2 at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples; Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1 at Milan's Teatro Arcimboldi and Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 5 at the Teatro dal Verme, also in Milan; Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Orchestra of the Teatro Massimo in Palermo; and a recital at the International Piano Festival of Brescia and Bergamo. Internationally, he has appeared in Paris, Berlin, London, New York City, Hamburg, Salzburg, Warsaw, Mexico City, and Buenos Aires, among many others. In his native Italy, Mr. Albanese has performed at leading theaters, including Florence's Teatro del Maggio Musicale, Bologna's Teatro Carlo Felice, the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome; Trieste's Teatro Verdi; the Arena di Verona; and Venice's Teatro La Fenice. The pianist's discography includes recordings of compositions by Chopin, Schubert, Schumann, Scriabin, Mendelssohn, Debussy, Bartók, Szymanowski, and an album of works by Italian composer Luciano Simoni. Born in Reggio Calabria, Mr. Albanese began playing piano at age five and studied in Pesaro and Imola. He was a first-prize-winner at the 1997 Premio Venezia Piano Competition and the 2003 Vendome Prize Piano Competition, and he was awarded a special prize at the 54th annual Busoni International Piano Competition.