



CHIEF PHILANTHROPY OFFICER
SAN FRANCISCO OPERA
San Francisco, California
[San Francisco Opera](https://www.sfo.org)



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the San Francisco Opera in the search for a Chief Philanthropy Officer.

The Chief Philanthropy Officer will work closely with the General Director and Board of Directors on the development, implementation, execution, and evaluation of long-term fundraising goals and strategies for the San Francisco Opera, serving as the senior leader dedicated to contributed revenue and acting as a critical member of the General Director's executive team. The Chief Philanthropy Officer will direct and oversee a fundraising team of some seventeen professionals, fostering a diverse, positive, collaborative, and inclusive environment, while establishing and measuring annual plans, goals, reporting, and performance metrics. The Chief Philanthropy Officer will leverage the talent and commitment of the Board of Directors as well as develop annual departmental budgets that support the program, contributed revenue goals, and growth.

One of the largest opera companies in North America, San Francisco Opera has been thrilling audiences since 1923. It is known for commissioning numerous world premieres, training some of opera's greatest artists, and being one of the leading opera stages in the world. It believes opera is a uniquely compelling, entertaining, and emotionally exhilarating art form. Its mission is to bring together growing audiences to experience opera's transformative power. Its values are to: pioneer new approaches to producing large-scale opera; strive for the highest standards of artistic integrity and excellence; foster a positive, collaborative, diverse, and inclusive organization; develop new audiences and create dynamic audience relationships; create impactful reciprocal connections with the community through education and engagement; and uphold fiscal rigor and sound management as prerequisites for creativity.

San Francisco Opera has long been committed to expanding the future of the art-form. From world-recognized training programs through the San Francisco Opera Center, to simulcasts at Oracle Park (the home of the San Francisco Giants) that have attracted over 30,000 people, to the installation of a high-definition media suite, to the appointment of the industry's first director of diversity, San Francisco Opera has a long history of pushing new boundaries. It also has a long history of producing operas of life-changing impact over its hundred year history, being one of the most important stages where singers like Leontyne Price, Birgit Nilsson, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Renata Tebaldi, Anna Netrebko, Tito Gobbi, and Boris Christoff made their American debuts. Performing in the beautiful 1932 War Memorial Opera House (seating 3,100), it has two season periods, one from September – December, and the other from May – June.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Chief Philanthropy Officer will report to General Director Matthew Shilvock, and will be a part of the General Director's executive team. The Chief Philanthropy Officer will oversee a team of seventeen.

FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR

San Francisco Opera is on the cusp of a thrilling return from the pandemic. There are some extraordinary things coming together in an exciting fusion of possibility:

- *The start of the tenure of our new music director, Eun Sun Kim. She welcomes every member of the Company into her vision for music making at the highest levels of excellence.*
- *Our centennial season in 2022-23. An incredible opportunity to celebrate the next chapter of this storied arts company as we enter our second century.*
- *The creation of new programs of innovation and creativity with the launch of the Creative Edge Fund, and the creation of new experimental programs aimed at pushing the bounds of the art-form and audience growth.*
- *The deepening DEI work that the Company is undertaking. SFO was the first large arts company to hire a Director of Diversity in 2019, and we are on a collective journey to become a more equitable, anti-racist organization in our work and in our art.*
- *Continuation of our Campaign for the Second Century, currently in its quiet phase, aiming to build the endowment to \$350M (currently approaching \$300M).*

The successful candidate will join an experienced management team that is focused on bringing the highest quality opera to broad and diverse audiences, and they will be a key partner in inspiring current and future philanthropists, building the Opera's deeply passionate and generous donor community. They will have the opportunity to make an indelible impact on one of the leading opera companies in the world, energizing the community around a re-emerging opera company looking to forge new pathways, push artistic boundaries, and celebrate the extraordinary quality of artistry under the baton of Eun Sun Kim. They will have the chance to develop strategic partnerships with the Opera's company sponsors and other leadership donors and Board members. This is a springboard moment for the Company. After a number of years focusing the budget and activity of the Company, we are poised to supercharge and grow the impact of SFO through our centennial season and beyond. It is a unique opportunity to be a part of setting the trajectory for opera in the Bay Area for the next hundred years.

–Matthew Shilvock, Tad and Dianne Taube General Director

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Philanthropy Officer will

- craft the strategic and operational framework to ensure that contributed revenue goals are met (around \$35M annually);
- develop additional strategies for unique fundraising needs, including the centennial season in 2022-23;
- lead, motivate, mentor, and nurture a team of development professionals in areas to include individual and leadership giving, annual giving, institutional giving, legacy giving, and special events;

- guide the strategic development and creation of major donor relationships, connecting and inspiring donors with artistic and organizational projects and working directly with leadership donors to deepen connections with the company;
- build new leadership relationships that make possible organizational advances in diversity, innovation, experimentation, and artistic growth, particularly as the company moves into its centennial season;
- work to advance company diversity and inclusion goals in the management of the department, the composition of the donor base and board recruitment;
- manage the day-to-day activities of the development department including donor research, prospects, cultivation, solicitation, recognition, and reporting;
- define donor portfolios for gift officers and track progress against measurable goals;
- oversee the company's legacy giving program and develop strategies to empower donors to consider estate giving;
- oversee development revenue projections and expense budget management (departmental expense budget of \$3.5M/year);
- work with the General Director and executive team on overarching issues of company strategy, culture, and activity;
- meet regularly with Board leadership and guide and shape the fundraising work of the Board;
- oversee the staffing of a number of board committees/taskforces, and work directly with Board leadership and the Office of the General Director to facilitate board engagement, board leadership development, and board recruitment;
- collaborate with other patron-facing departments to ensure a cohesive approach to patron engagement, brand fidelity, and messaging across the company;
- oversee donor engagement strategies through special events, donor stewardship, and engagement to keep donors connected to the artistic energy of the company; and
- encourage a culture of connection with philanthropy through the organization, develop ways for company members to connect with donors, and increase visibility of the artistic process to the donor community.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

San Francisco Opera is committed to ensuring people of racially and culturally diverse backgrounds and experiences share and enjoy its art, resources, and relationships equitably, embracing community values and generating institutional prosperity.

San Francisco Opera made a historic choice in 2019 by announcing the formation of the Department of Diversity, Equity, and Community (DEC) and the appointment of the company's first Director of Diversity, Equity, and Community.

San Francisco Opera envisions a vibrant arts world in which people of all backgrounds create, share, and enjoy resources and relationships equitably, unleashing individual potential, embracing collective responsibility, and generating global prosperity. As one of the largest performing arts nonprofits in the Bay Area, San Francisco Opera acknowledges that it must continue to examine how its policies and practices either dismantle or maintain systems of inequity. It invites others to stand with it so that all can collectively move toward a climate of healing and reconciliation rooted in anti-racism.

LEADERSHIP AND KEY COLLEAGUES

Matthew Shilvock

Tad and Dianne Taube General Director

Matthew Shilvock, the Tad and Dianne Taube General Director, is San Francisco Opera's seventh general director, having assumed the role on August 1, 2016. He is responsible for all artistic and business aspects of the organization, overseeing a repertory season of eight productions as well as education and ancillary programming in a company that employs up to 1,000 people a year on a budget of \$72 million.

Shilvock is passionate about telling profound stories of humanity through the total art-form of opera, connecting audiences with the emotional core of the repertoire, and empowering the whole Company through a supportive, creative, and fiscally responsible workplace. About to begin his sixth season as General Director, Shilvock has overseen a major restructure of the senior management team, the inception of an endowment campaign in support of the Company's second century, the production of two world premiere operas: John Adams' *Girls of the Golden West* and Bright Sheng's *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and the development of a number of programs aimed at highlighting the talents of the Company, including annual concerts of the Opera Chorus and a new side-by-side orchestra program with San Francisco Unified School District schools.

His priorities include replenishing the core repertory productions of San Francisco Opera, building audiences by creating a dynamic audience experience and strong sense of community pride, connecting the Company to the fast-growing swirl of new thinking and new technologies in the Bay Area, and developing a stable financial model for large-scale repertory opera in the 21st century.

Eun Sun Kim

Caroline H. Hume Music Director Designate

Korean conductor Eun Sun Kim begins her tenure as the Caroline H. Hume Music Director of San Francisco Opera on August 1, 2021, after being named to the role in December 2019. She made her highly-anticipated Company debut conducting *Rusalka* in 2019. Her presence in North America was first established with performances of Verdi's Requiem with the Cincinnati Symphony and *La Traviata* with Houston Grand Opera, with the latter earning her an appointment as Principal Guest Conductor.

Kim's recent engagements have been with the Orchestre National de France, La Scala, the Orquesta sinfónica de Madrid, LA Opera, Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Oregon Symphony, Seattle Symphony, and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. Major upcoming debuts include subscription concerts with the New York Philharmonic and productions with the Metropolitan Opera.

A regular guest conductor at European opera houses, Kim maintains a particularly close connection with the Berlin State Opera (*La Traviata*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Il Trovatore*). She has also led production at the Bavarian State Opera (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Stuttgart State Opera (*Madama Butterfly*), Semperoper Dresden (*Rigoletto*), Cologne Opera (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), and Frankfurt Opera (*La Sonnambula*, *The Count of Luxembourg*, *La Bohème*, *Die Csárdásfürstin*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*). Her Scandinavian engagements have taken place at the Royal Swedish Opera (*Madama Butterfly*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Copenhagen's Royal Danish Opera (*Il Trovatore*), and opera houses in Oslo (*Carmen*) and Bergen (*Madama Butterfly*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*), as well as concert appearances with Gothenburg Symphony, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, and orchestras in Malmö, Umeå, and Aarhus.

Keith B. Geeslin**President, San Francisco Opera Association**

President of the San Francisco Opera Association, Keith Geeslin has been a General Partner of Francisco Partners, a firm specializing in structured investments in technology companies undergoing strategic, technological, and operational inflection points, since January 2004. From 2001 until October 2003, Geeslin served as Managing General Partner of the Sprout Group, a venture capital firm, with which he became associated in 1984. Currently, Geeslin is a member of the Board of Directors of Synaptics, CommVault Systems, Inc., and Allston Trading. Geeslin received a B.S. in Electrical Engineering and an M.S. in Engineering-Economic Systems from Stanford University, as well as an M.A. in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics from Oxford University.

Son of a mezzo-soprano, Geeslin was exposed to opera growing up and played piano as a child. Among his favorite San Francisco Opera performances are hearing Ruth Ann Swenson as Gilda in *Rigoletto* in 1997 and Karita Mattila as Emilia Marty in *The Makropulos Case* in 2010, as well as experiencing the 2011 *Ring* cycle. Wife Priscilla Geeslin serves as President of the Board of the San Francisco Symphony, as well as on the boards of NARAL, and Grace Cathedral.

John A. Gunn**Chair, Board of Directors**

Chairman of San Francisco Opera's Board of Directors, John Gunn is former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Dodge & Cox Investment Managers, one of the most successful professional investment management firms in the country. Gunn has been a San Francisco Opera subscriber since 1988 and joined the Board of Directors in 2002. He and his wife Cynthia Fry Gunn are Company Sponsors and have underwritten numerous San Francisco Opera productions, including the world premieres of *Appomattox*, *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, *Heart of a Soldier* and *Girls of the Golden West*, and the American premiere of *Le Grand Macabre*, to name just a few.

Gunn's love of the operatic art form began in his formative years when he attended numerous Company dress rehearsals with friend and fellow student Ronald Adler (son of former San Francisco Opera General Director Kurt Herbert Adler). A graduate of Stanford University in 1966, Gunn served as a commanding officer in the U.S. Coast Guard and returned to the Bay Area where upon he received his M.B.A. from the Stanford Graduate School of Business in 1972. Mr. and Mrs. Gunn are active members of the community, providing significant leadership and financial support to Stanford University, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and San Francisco Opera. He is chairman of the Advisory Council for the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR), serves as a trustee of Stanford University, and is Vice Chair of Stanford Health Care. Mrs. Gunn serves as an overseer of Stanford's Hoover Institution and is on the board of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The San Francisco Opera seeks a Chief Philanthropy Officer with

- a commitment to the mission and vision of the San Francisco Opera;
- knowledge of current and emerging best fundraising practices and an ability to manage a dynamic and highly competent fundraising team;
- an understanding of diversity, inclusion, and equity as core values and an ability to engage in a critical assessment of progress toward achieving and maintaining an inclusive culture in which diversity is valued and respected;
- superior interpersonal, organizational, written, and oral communications skills;

- an ability to articulate, set, and achieve ambitious goals and objectives;
- an ability to relate to donors and staff, Board members, and patrons with authenticity and authority;
- an ability to collaborate, delegate, and prioritize work efforts with attention to detail;
- an understanding of nonprofit accounting standards and practices; and
- proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook, and Power Point), donor databases and experience with Tessitura (preferred).

A bachelor's degree is required for this position as is at least eight years of experience leading a development function. Experience in an arts or cultural institution is preferred.

SALARY & BENEFITS

The San Francisco Opera offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

LOCATION

This position is based in San Francisco, California.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of the San Francisco Opera as well as the responsibilities and qualifications stated in the prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit:

[Chief Philanthropy Officer, San Francisco Opera.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Anne Johnson:

[annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com.](mailto:annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

All inquiries will be held in confidence.