



## **SAN FRANCISCO OPERA** **SUPERNUMERARY MANUAL**

**Please find the important contact and telephone information listed on the back page.**

### **History:**

You are joining a prestigious opera company with a world-class reputation. Founded in 1922 by Gaetano Merola, the Company has been present in the War Memorial Opera House since 1932 (except for a brief earthquake retrofit during the 1990s). Merola led the Company to international prominence until his death in 1953. The Company presented the leading singers of the day, including Kirsten Flagstad, Lauritz Melchior, Lawrence Tibbett, Elisabeth Rethberg, Giovanni Martinelli, Friedrich Schorr and Lily Pons. Kurt Herbert Adler, who ran the Company until 1981, succeeded Merola. During the Adler years, the company introduced many celebrated artists to this country, including Renata Tebaldi, Leonie Rysanek, and Birgit Nilsson. Since that time, we have had only 3 other directors: Terry McEwan (1981-1988), Lotfi Mansouri (1988-2002) and now, Pamela Rosenberg (2001 –) continues the legacy. Nearly every great opera singer in the last 80 years has graced our stage.

### **You Belong to a Great Team:**

Now, as a supernumerary, you will be sharing this same stage as these legends. The San Francisco Opera is a company of many talented artists, including principal singers, a world-famous chorus, stagehands, dancers, orchestra, conductors, the stage directors, and the technicians and artists responsible for lighting, scenery and costumes. Your enthusiasm and cooperation are an important part of this company's great spirit.

## **ARRIVE 15 MINUTES EARLY TO REHEARSALS –**

Rehearsals begin **promptly** at the appointed time. You are expected to be ready to go on stage at the time the rehearsal is called. Many of our personnel are paid on an hourly scale and if you are late, you will put everyone behind schedule and cost the company money. Please plan to arrive no later than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled rehearsal time. This enables us to check you in, give you any new staging notes, pass out your badge, distribute revised schedules and the like. It also enables you to find parking, get settled, don any appropriate rehearsal attire, etc. It is disruptive and discourteous to your colleagues to arrive late. Turn off any beeping or ringing cell phone, pager, etc.

It is mandatory that supers be present for all rehearsals and performances for which they are called, unless you have been officially excused. Your absence from even one rehearsal may cause production delays as you learn your staging and those around you are restaged. **In case of illness or emergency, or if you are running late, please telephone us as soon as possible.** If an emergency arises **on the day of a rehearsal or performance**, you must first contact the Production Super Captain, then Carrie Murphy at 415-551-6281 or phone the Scheduling Department at 415-565-6479 and ask them to pass along the message. Please make the call yourself, do not ask someone to call on your behalf unless you are unable to place the call.

## **MAKEUP & WIG CALLS –**

Many people depend upon you to make your call time. **Do not try to adjust your call time to suit your schedule**. Makeup and dress calls might be an hour or more before the start time of the performance or rehearsal. If you are late, then you effectively cause a backlog for the makeup and wig artists. The result is a rush to get all of the supers, chorus and ballet complete in time for curtain. It is not only selfish to be late for your call, but will directly affect what is seen on stage – our ultimate product.

If a super does not make it to the theater in time for their makeup or dress call, the alternate will go on for them. Wig, Makeup and Wardrobe will wait until 30 minutes till curtain before putting the alternate in makeup. (If the call is different from the usual 1- \_ hours prior to curtain, the math stays the same.) Due to sanitary issues, once the alternate has gone into costume, the original person CANNOT get into that costume. The alternate will go on.

## **SIGN-IN AS SOON AS YOU ARRIVE –**

The sign-in sheet is posted on the Supers' Call Board in the Opera House, or in a prominent place for an out-of-house rehearsal. This is our only method of knowing that you are here. These sheets are also used to tabulate your stipend reimbursement. **If you do not sign in, we do not know that you have made your call time**. In that case, it is likely that an alternate will be put on in your place. Dressing room assignments and other important notices will also be posted on the callboard.

## **AT REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES:**

- **Always wait where stage management personnel can easily locate you**
- Stay within hearing distance of the stage managers while the rehearsal is in progress
- Respond promptly to your "places" call
- Take your assigned prop (if applicable)
- Stay in your entrance or preset position, and do not wander off.

Assistant Stage Managers (ASMs) are responsible for making sure everyone is in the right place and ready to go. If you have a problem and must leave the stage area after you are already in place, please tell the ASM.

Do not pick up or disturb props that are not assigned to you, and never remove a prop from the stage area. For your safety, clear the backstage area as quickly and quietly as possible before a set change or large exit of chorus or supers.

During rehearsals, the stage managers may ask you to sit in the house auditorium. Do not use the bridge across the orchestra pit. Please use the door into the lobby from the stage left hallway. When you are in the auditorium, sit in the right side of the house so that we may easily locate you. **No food or beverages are allowed in the auditorium. No costumes are allowed in the auditorium. No one in body makeup is allowed in the auditorium.** Please leave your belongings in the auditorium or dressing rooms, **NOT** in the backstage area where they may be confused with a prop. Please do not bring valuables with you.

#### **PLEASE BE PATIENT –**

We will try to use your time in rehearsal as efficiently as possible, however, **you may wish to bring along a book, knitting, etc. with you.** Waiting is an essential part of preparing a production. You will eventually go on, no matter how long it seems to take in rehearsal. Once the show moves into performance, the waiting time is minimized.

#### **NO VISITORS –**

It is company policy that visitors, children and pets are **not** permitted at either rehearsals or backstage during performances. **Additionally, please do not come backstage during a performance or rehearsal for an opera in which you are not a super.**

#### **DRESS REHEARSAL PASSES –**

Generally, each super may invite **ONE GUEST** to the final dress rehearsal of the opera in which they appear (some opera's final dress rehearsals will be closed). This is a privilege: please do not abuse it by asking to invite additional people. **Do NOT come to a dress rehearsal for an opera in which you are not appearing as a super UNLESS you are using a light-walking or other volunteer credit.** It is not fair to those individuals who have earned the right to attend these special rehearsals. If you would like to volunteer as a light-walker or in some other capacity, see Carrie Murphy for details.

#### **PLEASE BE QUIET BACKSTAGE –**

**When backstage, please talk only if absolutely necessary.** The cumulative sound of many people whispering or talking makes it very difficult for stage management to work effectively and is unfair to other performers.

#### **KNOW YOUR NEXT CALL –**

The schedule you have received is often very tentative and subject to change. **Before you leave each rehearsal or performance, make sure you know when you are next called.** Though the Production Super Captain will notify you of rehearsal time changes, it is your responsibility to know when you are next called. You may find the rehearsal schedule online at <http://spearheadnews.com>. The password is dramaturg. You may also call the super hotline at 415-565-3200.

## CASTING –

**The director, or assistant director on behalf of the director, according to the director's artistic vision, makes all final selections.** If you are selected for a part, please do not reject it because you think it does not suit you. Having been in a role in a previous production of the opera is no guarantee that you will be in that role in a new production. In rare circumstances, the director may overrule our casting choices. The stage director's decision is final.

Alternates (also known as “covers”) may be chosen for each show. Alternates must fit the appropriate age, size and type to fit properly into the costumes. Alternates must attend all rehearsals and performances. There is no guarantee that an alternate will go onstage in a performance.

## REIMBURSEMENT –

Supers receive a stipend of **\$10 per dress call**, which includes dress rehearsals plus all performances and **\$5 per staging rehearsal**. Stipend checks are disbursed at the final performance.

## COSTUMES –

Costume fittings are made by appointment at the San Francisco Opera Costume Shop, 170 Ninth Street, between Mission and Howard Streets. Fittings may take anywhere from 15 minutes to one hour. We will arrange an appointment time for you. **It is important to honor your scheduled fitting.** Many people are counting on you. If you must be late, or reschedule, please telephone as soon as possible. Call Carrie Murphy 415-551-6281 or phone the shop directly at 415-551-6300 if you are unable to reach Carrie in person.

The Wardrobe Department will be in charge of the costume once it comes to the opera house. For performances and costumed rehearsals, go directly to your assigned dressing room as soon as you have signed in. Dressers will be there **at the appointed call time** to help you put on your costume.

**DO NOT PUT ON YOUR COSTUME WITHOUT A DRESSER PRESENT.** You will have an assigned dressing table space. Look on the mirror for the costume plot with your name on it.

Please try not to bring things of value with you to the opera house. San Francisco Opera cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. Lockers are provided for your use in the hallways outside the dressing rooms with a designation “Supers.” Do not leave items in the lockers overnight.

**Your costume must be worn as assigned.** A Wardrobe or Costume Supervisor must approve any proposed changes in a costume. No personal jewelry, including body piercings, watches or nail polish should be visible while you are in costume. Glasses must not be worn on stage without the prior approval of the director.

**Everyone must wear suitable undergarments for all fittings, rehearsals and performances.**

The costumes you will be wearing are hand crafted and very expensive. While in costume, **please do not eat, smoke or drink staining beverages, e.g. coffee, tea, soda, etc.** If you want to eat during a break, please use one of the robes provided to cover your costume. Please be aware that your costume might become wrinkled or soiled if you sit in it while waiting to go on. This will make you look bad on stage. Ask the wardrobe staff for tips on how to sit in a costume in the least detrimental way. If your costume needs to be repaired, please inform your dresser before leaving the theater.

**Due to stringent union contract requirements and potential fines, all performers should proceed to their dressing room IMMEDIATELY following your final stage appearance, and change out of your costume. Do not linger for photos or chitchat. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule! Violations will result in the opera company receiving substantial overtime penalties, and your dismissal from the super roster.** After removing your costume, hang it in the space designated by the Wardrobe Department. In the case of a quick-change, Dressers will assist you.

#### **WIGS AND MAKEUP –**

These requirements are different for each show. Usually, each super will apply his or her own makeup base using a makeup kit assigned to you individually. For hygiene reasons, you should not share your base with anyone else. If you run out, notify the makeup staff, who will supply you with more. Proceed to the makeup room as soon as your base is dry. Wait in line until a makeup artist calls you. The artist will know exactly what the makeup requirements are for the show. You will usually apply your makeup prior to dressing, although you should check with your dresser first. Once the makeup has been applied, do not attempt to alter it.

The Wig and Makeup Department has rather stringent Health & Safety Guidelines. They are instructed to sanitize their hands after working on each client. Also, they are instructed to notify their foreman immediately should any client appear to have health problems. Health problems are defined to include open wounds or sores, conjunctivitis, intoxication, lack of personal hygiene (body odor, dirty hair, head lice, etc.) Please see Carrie Murphy or Gerd Mairandres 415-565-6454 if you have any such problems to discuss how they may be best resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

If a wig or facial hair is to be worn with your costume, a notice will be taped onto the mirror at your dressing station. If you see such a notice with your name on it, go to the wig room and ask if your hair needs to be applied before or after you are in costume, then proceed accordingly. If you are wearing your own hair and/or facial hair, do not cut it without first checking with the Wig Master, Gerd Mairandres. As soon as you have made your final appearance onstage, proceed directly to have your wig or facial hair removed. **Never attempt to remove your own wig or facial hair without assistance from the wig staff.**

#### **INSURANCE –**

San Francisco Opera is concerned about your health and safety while volunteering your services for activities and events. San Francisco Opera works to provide a safe and healthy environment for all employees as well as volunteers. For your benefit, **we provide an insurance policy as a secondary policy** to your own Medical Plan for accidents and injuries, which may be attributed to your service with San Francisco Opera. **This plan may act as a primary plan if you do not have a Medical Plan of your own.** A summary of the plan is included in this packet.

#### **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION –**

You will also find an Emergency Contact Sheet in this packet. **This information is strictly confidential for use in a medical emergency only.**

## **IDENTIFICATION BADGES –**

Each super will be issued an identification badge. You should be prepared to show this badge to the stage door security personnel upon entering the opera house. Keep this badge with you at all times when you are in the opera house, except when in costume.

**Please do not come backstage during a performance or rehearsal if you are not in that opera. If you lose the badge, you will be charged \$10 to replace it.**

## **PHOTOGRAPHS –**

Photographs provide you and your fellow supers with wonderful mementos of your experience. However, please observe common sense and the following rules:

- **No photographs may be taken in the communal dressing rooms or backstage**
- **Do not disturb an artist in his or her dressing room to request a photo**
- Do not interfere with the needs of the artists or dressers to carry out a timely costume change
- If you wish to take photos in your costume, please do so prior to your final appearance on stage

Once you have made your last exit, immediately proceed to your dressing room and remove your costume. We are governed by very strict union guidelines, and any delay can result in overtime and/or fines for the company.

Opening and closing nights are generally NOT good times for photographs. The artists are typically anxious and many last-minute preparations are underway. On closing nights, the sets and costumes are generally packed up and transported as soon as the performance is concluded.

Please do not disturb singers in their dressing rooms. Although not on stage, a singer may be vocalizing, studying their role or simply relaxing. Do not impose on their personal time or space. Also, do not snap photos as a singer is rushing on or off stage. Each show will have an appointed representative from the Super Committee who will coordinate a time for artist photos. This schedule will be posted on the callboard.

**Photographs are never permitted during a rehearsal, whether onstage or in a rehearsal hall. Tape recording or video recording a rehearsal or performance is absolutely prohibited.**

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please call Carrie Murphy 415-551-6281.



**IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:**

Carrie Murphy – Super Coordinator 415-551-6281

Super Hotline for recorded schedule information 415-565-3200  
[spearheadnews.com](http://spearheadnews.com)

Costume Shop 415-551-6300

Scheduling Office - If you are running late and cannot reach PSC 415-565-6479

The San Francisco Opera switchboard (Monday - Friday 12pm-4pm) 415-861-4008

SF Opera Security Guard Station (Last ditch effort number) 415-557-6238

On dress rehearsal or performance days, please leave a message with the Production Super Captain and then keep trying until you reach someone.