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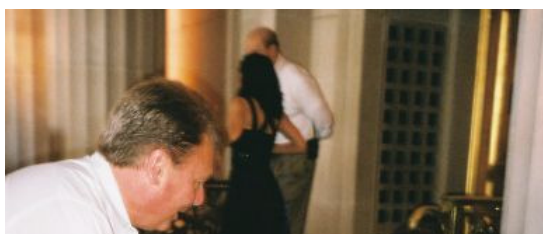
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Russian soprano and SFO alum Anna Netrebko signed all things Anna for two hours Sunday at SFO

[Anna Netrebko](#) signed all things Anna for almost two hours after closing her run as the glamorous and dying courtesan Violetta Valéry in Verdi's *La Traviata*. A bottle of champagne on her table, Anna glowed, her black hair pulled back in a ponytail, her tan shown off with a metallic embellished sweater over neutral colors; legs shown off with little white thigh length shorts and eggshell colored high heeled pumps. A fan gave her Mardi Gras beads for more metallic color. She could have been on an elegant transatlantic cruise.



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The [SF Balalaika Ensemble](#) in full folk dress performed on native instruments.



Outside the Pride Parade revelers danced at Civic Center, booming disco music in the summer sun. One young man would almost fall asleep on my shoulder during the BART ride home, must have been an exhausting day for him.

There was no end to the delight of Anna's fans and no end to the line which would around the corner of the opera house lobby, down the hall and up the stairs. SF Balalaika in full Russian folk dress played jubilantly as Anna smiled and even accepted a gift or two—something in a Dalmation print gift bag and a set of Anna t-shirts including one in an infant size for her new baby. One lovely woman told me somebody got a cell phone picture of her with Anna since she and Anna each hail from

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[Cherson](#). It's a town on the Delta where the river falls into the Black Sea, said Lydia. Lisa Halperin emailed me the shot:



Amid the Annamalia, my own copy of her new CD [Souvenirs](#). I told Anna my story about her jazzy opening of "La Traviata" got my highest webviews ever, three times more than usual. *Thank you* Anna said. *Thank you*, I said.



Anna sings a duet on *Souvenirs* with [Elina Garanca](#) of Latvia, whom I will probably interview by phone this fall about her role as the muse in *Tales of Hoffman*. Elina had said during her live interview at the simulcast from the Met of [La Cenerentola](#), that she would be moving out of Bel Canto into more melodic roles.

I actually waited around for two hours to get Anna's autograph. I could have been number two in line but decided to check in with Nat the opera house doctor about my knee and why I was hobbling. I could hear the applause for Anna and her curtain call going on and on above my head, it was like the roar of Niagara Falls, endless. Nat gauzed a plastic bag of ice on my sore knee and sent me on my way with RICE advice: rest, ice, compression and elevation. He's been with the opera 24 years. Helen the hat check lady insisted I go see him, she gave me an abandoned umbrella to use as a cane. Thanks Helen for your kindness and resourcefulness, thank you Dr. Nat for relieving my pain graciously.





I'll be off to the Fillmore jazz festival this weekend and to see American and southern belle Elizabeth Futral take over the lead role in *La Traviata*. Cannot wait to see that classic car role on stage in Act I when the party starts.



For more info: <http://www.sfopera.com/>, <http://www.sfbalalaika.com/>

Photos of CD signing: Cindy Warner

Photo of *La Traviata* car: Courtesy of SFO

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