

UPDATED 8/27



For Immediate Release

**PENINSULA BALLET THEATRE LAUNCHES '22-23 SEASON WITH**

## ***CARMINA BURANA***

**NEW PRODUCTION BY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR GREGORY AMATO  
FEATURING PENINSULA BALLET THEATRE DANCERS,  
MASTERWORKS CHORALE, RAGAZZI BOYS CHORUS,  
SOPRANO SHAWNETTE SULKER, TENOR COREY HEAD,  
BARITONE ZACHARY GORDIN, PACIFIC STICKS PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE,  
CONDUCTOR DR. BRYAN BAKER;  
SEPTEMBER 24 AT 7 PM & SEPTEMBER 25 AT 2 PM  
SAN MATEO PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**



*Carmina Burana's "Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi;" credit Stefan Cohen*

**Carmina Burana Video Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-R3o5tRv0Sk>

**Tickets Now on Sale:** [www.peninsulaballet.org](http://www.peninsulaballet.org)

San Mateo, CA (August 27, 2022) — **Peninsula Ballet Theatre** (PBT) today announced the 2022-23 season, the Company's 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, will get underway September 24 and 25 with the premiere of Artistic Director **Gregory Amato's** fully staged production of Carl Orff's epic cantata, ***Carmina Burana***, presented in collaboration with three other acclaimed San Mateo County-based performing arts organizations,

**Masterworks Chorale, Ragazzi Boys Chorus, and Pacific Sticks Percussion Ensemble with pianists Inara Morgenstern and Paul McCurdy. Dr. Bryan Baker** will be on the podium leading the cast of 150 artists including guest soloists, soprano **Shawnette Sulker**, tenor **Corey Head** and **now added, baritone Zachary Gordin**. Both performances will be given at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center, 600 North Delaware Street.

Preceding *Carmina Burana*, Peninsula Ballet Theatre will begin with a short program of mixed repertory dances by Amato and new works by Bay Area choreographers **Marika Brussel** (*Unleashed*) and **Aline Carili** (*Expresse*).



*Carmina Burana's "Roasted Swan" Stuck Sanders and Ensemble; credit Stefan Cohen*

Commenting about his upcoming *Carmina Burana* premiere, Amato said, "I take my inspiration for this extraordinary work from Dutch master painter Heironymus Bosch's famous triptych of the late 15th Century, "The Garden of Earthly Delights," and its robust representation of humanity with its eruption of fantasy and chaos juxtaposed with idyllic innocence. The dance movement I've created is ritualistic, sensual and ominous reflecting the formidable music as set to this codex of sacred and profane texts."

German composer Carl Orff's towering masterpiece from 1937, *Carmina Burana* – "Songs of Beuren" – remains one of the most iconic and instantly recognizable works of the 20th Century. Conceived by Orff as a theatrical cantata for orchestra, adult and children's chorus, three vocal soloists and choreographed movement, *Carmina Burana* is based on a collection of 24 spiritual and carnal songs and poems authored by anonymous 13th Century medieval monks and minstrels. Orff's work is composed with a prologue and epilogue, and three highly descriptive scenes: "Primo Vere" ("In Early Spring"), "In Taberna" ("In the Tavern") and "Cours d'Amours" ("Court of Love").

Sung in Latin, Orff's magnum opus begins with the now-famous percussion downbeat and chorus powerfully intoning the words "O Fortuna," an ode to the wheel of fortune that determines the ever-changing fate of man. The composer's compelling score offers what has been described as simple orchestration, rich melodies and harmonies but combined with a driving rhythmic percussion to give the music a primeval, visceral character – arguably adding to the work's popular and enduring appeal.

**Christine Leslie**, Peninsula Ballet Theatre's Executive and Producing Director said, "Our 55th anniversary is about new artistic initiatives, new collaborations and new possibilities as we present a season of impactful and imaginative works. I'm absolutely delighted that our *Carmina Burana* will unite four of San Mateo County's leading arts organizations for this opening program, a wonderful opportunity to showcase all of this Peninsula talent."

**Erin Renfroe**, Masterworks Chorale Executive Director commented, "Masterworks Chorale is honored to collaborate with PBT on this special presentation of *Carmina Burana*. Though often presented as a primarily musical work, Orff envisioned this extraordinary choral composition as a fully staged piece involving dance, choreography, visual design and stage action. We look forward to being a part of this full production. I'm also pleased to announce that we will collaborate with Peninsula Ballet Theatre on a program to be announced for the 2023-24 Masterworks Chorale season, our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary."

**Masterworks Chorale:** Founded in 1964, Masterworks Chorale is critically recognized as one of Northern California's finest choral ensembles. Performing master works of sacred and secular choral music, from Baroque to Broadway, Masterworks is a much-loved Bay Area institution, treasure for its warmth of tone,

technical excellence, and commitment to the local community. Dr. Bryan Baker has been Artistic Director of the Choral since Fall 2002.

The choir performs four concert programs each season, accompanied by some of the Bay Area's finest professional musicians and vocal soloists. Additionally, Masterworks collaborates frequently with community arts organizations throughout the Bay Area, striving to enrich the cultural tapestry of our community with diverse concert programming and unique music enrichment outreach programs.

**Dr. Bryan Baker:** Artistic Director and Conductor of Masterworks Chorale since 2002, Dr. Bryan Baker also holds the positions of Director of Music at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, Associate Conductor of the San Francisco Choral Society, and is founder and director of the chamber choir Serenade.

In addition to the Masterworks orchestra, he has conducted the California Chamber Symphony, Solaris Chamber Orchestra, the Redwood Symphony, the Peninsula Symphonic Winds, the New Millennium Strings, and the Kensington Symphony Orchestra.

**Ragazzi Boys Chorus:** Under the leadership of Artistic and Executive Director **Kent Jue**, Ragazzi Boys Chorus appears regularly with other outstanding Bay Area performing arts organizations. Ragazzi collaborates with the San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Symphony, Opera San Jose, West Bay Opera, Lawrence Pech Dance Company, Peninsula Symphony, Masterworks Chorale, and the Stanford University Symphonic Chorus.

Ragazzi participated in the San Francisco Symphony's recording of Stravinsky's *Perséphone*, which was included in the Symphony's Grammy Award for best classical album and best orchestral performance. Ragazzi Boys Chorus made its Carnegie Hall debut in 2014 and regularly tours in the United States and internationally to widen chorus members' musical and cultural horizons, and deepen Ragazzi's reputation for performance excellence. Based in Redwood City, Ragazzi Boys Chorus was founded in 1987 by **Joyce Keil**.

**Shawnette Sulker:** A native of Guyana, soprano Shawnette Sulker has sung leading roles with various opera companies including San Francisco Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Internationale Opera Producties, Opera Naples, Union Avenue Opera, Natchez Opera Festival, Opera Parallèle, Pacific Opera Project, West Edge Opera, Festival Opera, Music in the Mountains, Mendocino Music Festival, and West Bay Opera. In concert, Ms. Sulker has performed with American Bach Soloists, Oakland Symphony, Eugene Symphony, Mark Morris Dance Group, Bear Valley Music Festival, Peninsula Symphony, Symphony Silicon Valley, Pacific Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco Choral Society, Santa Clara Chorale, UC Davis Symphony Chorus & Orchestra, Masterworks Chorale, Avedis Chamber Music Series, and Redwood Symphony.

**Corey Head:** Tenor Corey Head has built a successful performance career working with many prestigious groups in the Bay Area, including Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale, San Francisco Symphony, and American Bach Soloists. He continues to work with these groups and many others as soloist or chorus professional, including Albany Consort, Bay Choral Guild, Chora Nova, Marin Baroque, Marin Oratorio, Marin Symphony, San Francisco Choral Society, San Francisco Renaissance Voices, Stanford Choirs and Orchestras, and Viva La Musica. In addition to his busy performance schedule, Corey Head teaches private voice in his San Francisco studio.

**Zachary Gordin:** Praised for his "arresting musical insights" (*The Seattle Times*), baritone Zachary Gordin has established himself as a leading soloist, collaborative pianist, artist mentor, and impresario. His debut disc:

*Amour sans ailes - Songs of Reynaldo Hahn* on the MSR Classics label was named “Best Lieder Recording of 2017” by *Voix des Arts*. Recent engagements include performances with San Francisco Symphony, Dayton Opera, The Broad Stage, Festival Opera, Oakland Symphony, Sacramento Opera, Sacramento Philharmonic, Shreveport Opera, YOSA Philharmonic, Bay Area Rainbow Symphony, Olympic Music Festival, San Bernardino Symphony, and many others. He currently serves as General Director of Festival Opera.

Peninsula Ballet Theatre’s ’22-23 season continues with a thrilling *Hip-Hop Halloween* holiday program, October 29 and 30 featuring high-voltage hip-hop dancers from **Tribe** and **Poise’n**; and just in time for the Christmas season, two very popular family versions of the *Nutcracker - Classical Nutcracker* and *Hip-Hop Nutcracker* - presented December 16-18 at Redwood City’s Fox Theatre.

In the spring of 2023, the company will return to the San Mateo Performing Arts Center with a double bill of two one-act dance works beginning with the premiere of Amato’s *Carmen Suite* set to Rodion Shchedrin’s iconic score paired with **Zenón Barrón’s** folkloric dance tribute to Mexican artists **Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo** April 1 and 2; followed by a new production of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Tony Award-winning musical, *Evita*, directed by **Gary Stanford, Jr.**, May 19 and 20 at Redwood City’s Fox Theatre. The season will conclude with the **Peninsula International Dance Festival** showcasing the Bay Area’s talented multi-cultural dance community, July 15 and 16, San Mateo Performing Arts Center.

Tickets for *Carmina Burana* and the 2022 fall season programs are now on sale at [peninsulaballet.org](http://peninsulaballet.org). Single tickets are priced at \$65, \$45 and \$35; discounts of \$5-off for seniors (age 65+) and juniors (age 18 and below). San Mateo Performing Arts Center, 600 North Delaware Street; Fox Theatre, 2215 Broadway, Redwood City. All programs and casting for PBT’s ’22-23 season are subject to change.

Peninsula Ballet Theatre gratefully acknowledges the support of the **San Mateo County Arts Commission, NetSuite, Concar Enterprises, Google**, and the **David and Lucile Packard Foundation**.

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Please connect for feature interviews, photographs/video and press credentials.

***Carmina Burana* video link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-R3o5tRv0Sk>