

SEATTLE OPERA.

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Sail away to paradise with Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*

**Fashion icon Zandra Rhodes creates a colorful world with
head-turning sets, costumes**

Oct. 17 – 31, 2015

SEATTLE – Come away with Seattle Opera to an island paradise this fall. Bizet's intoxicating romance *The Pearl Fishers* will offer a chance to escape reality for a night of grand operatic spectacle Oct. 17 – 31, 2015. In this tale, a gorgeous priestess with an air of mystery is pursued by both a brave hunter and his best friend, the leader of a fishing village. Honor, jealousy, and communal duty complicate the love triangle; but a long-buried secret saves the day. Composed 12 years before *Carmen*, *The Pearl Fishers* is decorated with passionate duets, lusty choruses, and high-energy dance numbers. British fashion icon **Zandra Rhodes** has created a technicolor dream world with set and costume design. Rhodes has designed for Princess Diana and Elizabeth Taylor, and her vintage pieces have been worn by Sarah Jessica Parker on "Sex in the City," and by Kate Moss and Kelly Osbourne, to name a few. Seattle audiences may remember her whimsical costumes from *The Magic Flute* (2011).

Bringing this story of love and friendship to life is tenor **John Tessier**, returning as the rugged hunter Nadir, and baritone **Brett Polegato**, who returns as the strapping fisherman. Together, they'll perform "Au fond du temple saint" – the 'friendship duet' for which *The Pearl Fishers* is perhaps most famous.

However, while this particular piece is much-beloved, **Seattle Opera General Director Aidan Lang** says there's much more to Bizet's opera than its "greatest hit."

"The music of *The Pearl Fishers* is unceasingly apt for the dramatic moment at hand; at times bold and theatrical, at others ravishingly beautiful. This is French 19th century opera at its very best," Lang said. "Additionally, the vibrant designs by Zandra Rhodes capture the visual impact that the piece would surely have made on its original Parisian audience, but without making it a museum piece. Rhodes' designs make Bizet's masterpiece speak to today's audiences."

Starring as Leïla, the pinnacle of the two men's desires, is soprano **Maureen McKay**. McKay previously performed as a Seattle Opera Young Artist, and now makes her mainstage debut. In the opposite cast, **Elizabeth Zharoff** as Leïla is pursued by **Keith Phares** (Zurga) and **Anthony Kalil** (Nadir). Making company debuts in the role of the High Priest Nourabad are New Zealand bass **Jonathan Lemalu** and Korean baritone **Joo Won Kang**.

French Maestro **Emmanuel Joel-Hornak** makes his Seattle Opera debut, and Australian stage director **Andrew Sinclair** returns following *The Marriage of Figaro* at Seattle Opera (1989). San Diego-based choreographer **John Malashock** makes his company debut.

Several performances of *The Pearl Fishers* offer fun opportunities for families and audience members of all ages. Why not skip the trick and treat oneself to an opera on Halloween? (Most seats are 25 percent off). Those who come dressed up might see their picture on Seattle Opera's Facebook page! Additionally, Seattle Opera's Family Day offers \$15 admission (most any seat) for students 18 and under in the company of an adult, as well as fun intermission activities. Family Day is at 2 p.m., Sunday Oct. 18.

The Pearl Fishers premieres Saturday, Oct. 17, and runs through Saturday, Oct. 31. Tickets are available online at seattleopera.org or by calling 206.389.7676 or 800.426.1619. Tickets may also be purchased at the Box Office by visiting 1020 John Street (two blocks west of Fairview), Monday to Friday between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Ticket prices start at \$25. Groups save 15 percent: 206.676.5588 or groups@seattleopera.org. Seattle Opera Ticket Office: 206.389.7676/800.426.1619. Online orders: seattleopera.org.

Follow #SOPearlFishers on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and listen to excerpts of the opera on [SoundCloud](#).

Seattle Opera Family Day

Please note: Valid student ID or proof of age is required for entry. At least one full price adult ticket must be purchased with EVERY student ticket order. Limit four \$15 student tickets for each full price adult ticket purchased. \$15 student tickets are not available in the Dress Circle, Orchestra Center Aisle, and \$25 Second Tier seating sections. Subject to availability. More details are available at seattleopera.org/tickets/ways-to-save/.

THE PEARL FISHERS

Music by Georges Bizet
Libretto by Michel Carré and Eugène Cormon
In French with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performances: October 17 - 31, 2015

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours and 20 minutes
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinee at 2:00 p.m.

Premiere: September, 30, 1863 at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris
Previous Seattle Opera Productions: 1994, 2009

Cast:

Zurga	Brett Polegato Keith Phares *
Leïla	Maureen McKay † Elizabeth Zharoff †*
Nadir	John Tessier Anthony Kalil † *
Nourabad	Jonathan Lemalu † Joo Won Kang † *
Principal Dancers	Kyle Bernbach † Roxanne Foster Kyle Johnson
Conductor	Emmanuel Joel-Hornak †
Director	Andrew Sinclair †
Choreographer	John Malashock †
Set & Costume Design	Zandra Rhodes
Lighting Design	Ron Vodicka †
Hair & Makeup Design	Joyce Degenfelder
English Captions	Jonathan Dean
Sets and Costumes	San Diego Opera

† Seattle Opera Debut

* On October 18 & 30

Production sponsor: Marks Family Foundation

Maureen McKay is a former Seattle Opera Young Artist.

The Pearl Fishers

Free Public Previews

9/13/2015, 2 p.m., Gig Harbor Library
9/16/2015, 7 p.m., Bothell Library
9/20/2015, 7 p.m., West Seattle Library
9/24/2015, 7 p.m., Woodinville Library
9/26/2015, 7 p.m., Lakewood Library
9/27/2015, 2 p.m., Green Lake Library
9/28/2015, 7 p.m., Kirkland Library
9/29/2015, noon, Freeland Library
9/29/2015, 2 p.m., Coupeville Library
9/29/2015, 7 p.m., Milton Edgewood Library
10/1/2015, 7 p.m., Federal Way Library
10/2/2015, 2 p.m., Bainbridge Island Library
10/4/2015, 2 p.m., Frye Museum
10/4/2015, 2 p.m., Lynwood Library
10/5/2015, 7 p.m. Redmond Library
10/6/2015, 7 p.m., Auburn Library
10/7/2015, 6:30 p.m., Edmonds Library
10/7/2015, 7 p.m., Burien Library
10/8/2015, 7 p.m., Shoreline Library
10/10/2015, 1 p.m., Kingston Library at Little Boston
10/11/2015, 2 p.m., Vashon Island Library
10/12/2015, 7 p.m., Bellevue Library
10/13/2015, 2 p.m., Queen Anne Library
10/13/2015, 7 p.m., Third Place Books
10/13/2015, 7 p.m., Issaquah Library
10/14/2015, 2 p.m., Ballard Library
10/14/2015, 7 p.m., Mercer Island Library
10/15/2015, 10:30 a.m., Newport Way Library
10/15/2015, noon, Seattle Central Library

About Seattle Opera

Seattle Opera is a leading opera company, recognized both in the United States and around the world. The company is committed to advancing the cultural life in the Pacific Northwest with performances of the highest caliber, and through innovative education and community programs that take opera far beyond the McCaw Hall stage. Each year, more than 95,000 people attend Seattle Opera performances and the company's programs serve more than 400,000 people of all ages (including school performances, radio broadcasts and community engagement initiatives). Seattle Opera is especially known for its acclaimed works in the Richard Wagner canon, and has created an "international attraction" in its presentation of Wagner's epic *Ring*, according to *The New York Times*. Connect with Seattle Opera on Facebook, Twitter, SoundCloud and through the [Seattle Opera channel on Classical King FM. 98.1](#).