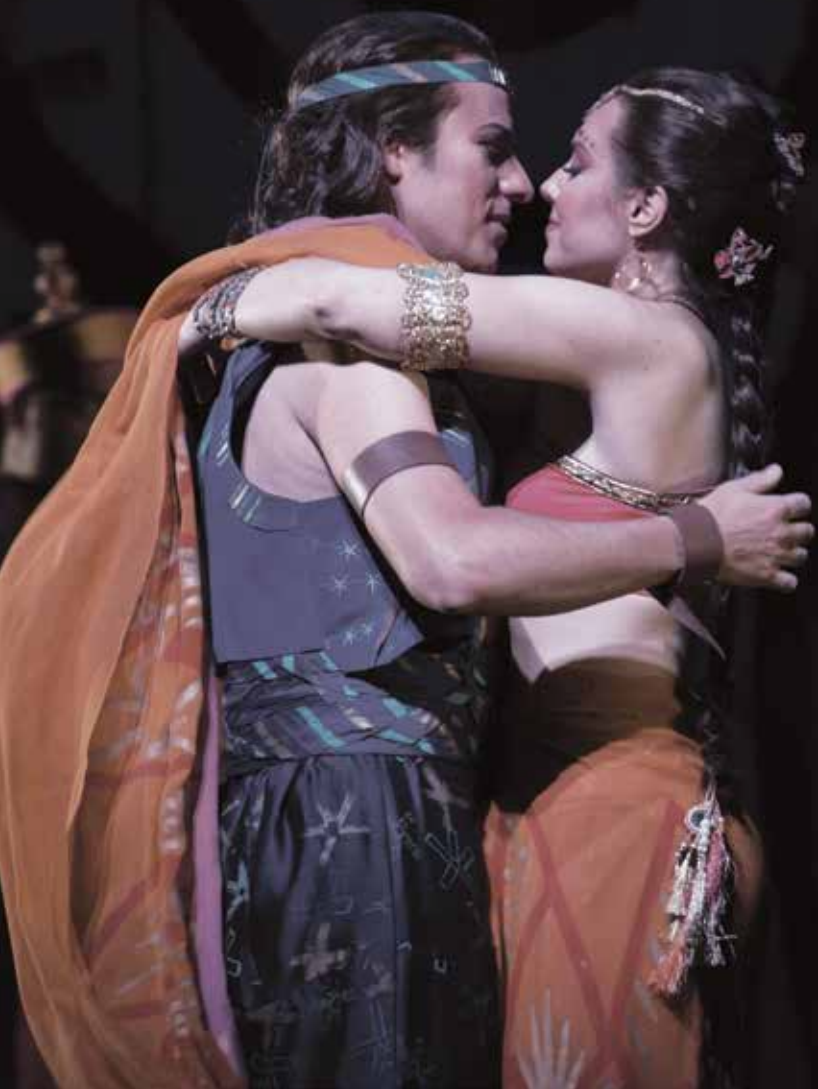


# SEATTLE OPERA. THANKFUL



**NOVEMBER  
2015**

Annual Fund  
Impact Report



# DEAR FRIENDS,

It's my pleasure to thank you for joining our great Seattle Opera donor family. Your support has brought forth a fantastic start to the 2015/16 season. Between a powerful season opener with *Nabucco*, the poignant world premiere of *An American Dream*, and the fanciful *Pearl Fishers* just recently, it's been quite a whirlwind of opera!

Our work together brings these operas to McCaw Hall's stage year after year, and it also supports the exciting programs we bring to schools and community centers throughout the region. As we get into the holidays and the spirit of thankfulness, I'd like to take a step back and recognize the great impact you have made through your steadfast attendance and contributions to Seattle Opera. You give this company the ability to thrive, to connect now more than ever with our community. Hats off to you!

This is the time of year when most people make their charitable contributions for tax benefits. Seattle Opera needs your continued support to ensure our 2015/16 programs are fully funded for the remainder of the season. If you haven't already, please call Donor Services at 206.389.7669 or visit [seattleopera.org/give](http://seattleopera.org/give) to make your donation before December 31.

Thank you, and I wish you all the best for the holidays and beyond!

Fondly,

Brian Marks  
Chair, Development Committee  
Seattle Opera Board of Directors

## OPERA TIME

Budding arts lovers  
experience opera

"We have enjoyed individual classroom workshops focused on opera as a storytelling medium through oral storytelling of a specific book (ours in Spanish!), where students learn that: **opera is fun, storytelling can be musical, and both demonstrate how to express our feelings.** I have nothing but admiration for this immensely talented group of amazing [teaching artists]! Thanks, Seattle Opera!"

-Bellevue area teacher

This message conveys the positive experience of Opera Time, a musical storytelling program delivered right into elementary school classrooms. Our Education Team works directly with schools to schedule one-time visits or 12-visit residency programs, enhancing students' literacy and creativity.

Your support of Seattle Opera's learning and engagement programs directly benefits classrooms across the region. In the case of the school in the above quote, their lower elementary classes enjoyed the story of *Adios, Oscar!* Themes of loving oneself and pursuing one's dreams were combined with singing, movement, and an introduction of Spanish vocabulary to create a fun, multi-dimensional experience.

**Thank you for bringing these stories to life for children across the Puget Sound region!**



# DONOR SPOTLIGHT: THE INDEFATIGABLE SUE BUSKE

Sue Buske is a delightful person and active supporter of Seattle Opera. Between being a subscriber, donor, volunteer, and member of the Seattle Opera Guild, The SOWING Circle, and Wagner and More, it's a wonder how she finds time to be involved in so many ways!

## HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INVOLVED WITH SEATTLE OPERA?

I first became involved through the Seattle Opera Guild. A friend of a friend invited me to join her book club and then attend an opera preview with her. As soon as the singers started to perform I thought, "Okay, it's time to start attending the opera and I now know people who will attend with me."

## WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A DONOR?

I decided to support Seattle Opera because they, like most other performing arts institutions, rely on donations to keep their doors open. Ticket prices do not cover the cost of sets, costumes, artists, lighting technicians, etc. To donate means doing my part. Since the company rewards their donors with perks such as dress rehearsals, meeting the artists, and other behind-the-scenes opportunities, it enhances my opera experience even more. I meet so many fun and interesting fellow opera lovers and learn more about the art form. I give to the opera, but I receive so much in return.

## HOW HAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH SEATTLE OPERA GROWN OVER THE YEARS?

I saw my first live opera as an eighth grader. My school's chorus teacher had the great sense and courage to take a group of semi-interested teenagers to a performance. I then attended with my Roosevelt High School German class. I eventually joined the Lakeside Preview Group, and my relationship with Seattle Opera grew from there. I began subscribing, donating, volunteering, and most recently I joined Wagner and More.

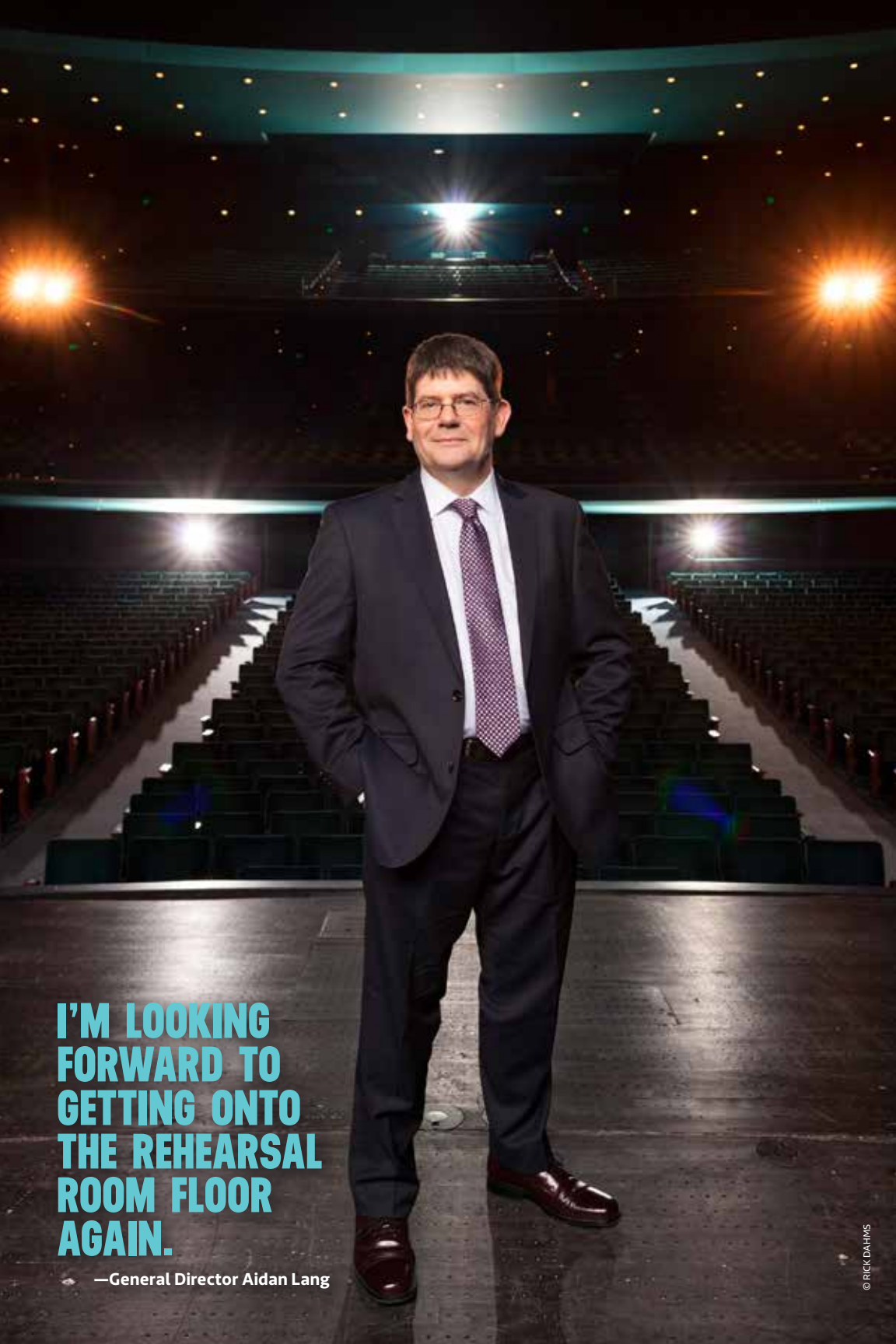
## WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER?

There are lots of ways to get involved as a volunteer at the opera, whether through the artist aides program or with office help. I have an administrative role to build relationships within the donor community. My first assignment was to call a list of donors to make sure they were aware of the dress rehearsal tickets they were entitled to, since they had not used this benefit last season. In the next few months, I may be making "thank you" phone calls. I also help with fundraiser and friend-raiser events, such as the August 1 event at St. Mark's Cathedral with main stage artists for *An American Dream* and *Nabucco*.



© Yuen Lui

**“AS A VOLUNTEER FOR SEATTLE OPERA I SHARE MY ENTHUSIASM FOR OPERA. IF THE TOPIC OF OPERA COMES UP IN A CONVERSATION WITH NON-SUBSCRIBERS I MAKE SURE THEY KNOW WHAT A GEM OF AN OPERA COMPANY WE HAVE HERE IN SEATTLE.”**



**I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING ONTO THE REHEARSAL ROOM FLOOR AGAIN.**

—General Director Aidan Lang

© RICK DAHMS

# AIDAN LANG'S *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* COMES TO SEATTLE

Seattle Opera's General Director, Aidan Lang, will be wearing two hats this winter: he's also the stage director of *The Marriage of Figaro*, which comes to Seattle in a successful production first unveiled at New Zealand Opera in 2010. He told Seattle Opera Dramaturg Jonathan Dean a little about the show and his hopes for its Seattle run.

## APART FROM SHEER EXHAUSTION, DO YOU ANTICIPATE ANY SPECIAL CHALLENGES ARISING FROM YOUR DUAL ROLE?

I'm going to be quite busy! But at its heart opera is a collaboration, and I've always worked that way. Early on I learned to respect both sides, the artistic and the administrative. It's not something I mean to replicate in the future; but I'm looking forward to getting onto the rehearsal room floor again.

## WHAT DID THE KIWIS THINK ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION?

It went over exceedingly well in New Zealand. People responded to its freshness. Clearly they could follow the plot, which pleased me, because that was actually what we set out to do. This opera has the world's most complex plot, really three interwoven plots, all of which are about scheming and conspiring. It can be confusing. But our scenic scheme ... taps into a more modern approach to story-telling than the strict conventions of eighteenth-century theater.

## DO COMIC OPERAS HAVE THE SAME IMPACT ALL OVER THE WORLD?

We general directors are always wary about international co-productions of comedies, because what makes people laugh in Amsterdam isn't necessarily what makes people laugh in Seattle. *Figaro* is slightly different because the comedy is built in; it's not about gags, it's a comedy of situation and human behavior. In that respect, this production should travel well. I wasn't a Kiwi when I created it; I was British. Still am!

## IS *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* A GOOD OPERA FOR FIRST-TIME OPERA-GOERS?

Yes, it's long, but it's very engaging, and moves at a brisk pace.



NEW ZEALAND OPERA 2010 MARRIAGE OF FIGARO. © NEIL MACKENZIE

Many thanks to donors like you who have brought this much-anticipated production to your Seattle Opera. It's easy to overlook the complexities of how an opera comes to be, but your steadfast support makes it easier to take on risks and explore new possibilities with our audiences. **Together, we nurture a great love for the exhilarating world of opera!**

**RSVP TODAY!**

3rd Annual  
**OPERA BALL**  
Saturday, January 16, 2016

*A Marriage of Figaro* wedding celebration  
Post-performance backstage reception  
Tickets start at \$125

**GALA FEATURING  
GREER GRIMSLEY**  
Saturday, April 16, 2016

A glamorous dinner and auction  
Museum of History & Industry  
Tickets start at \$750

**VISIT [SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/EVENTS](http://SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/EVENTS)  
FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

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