

# SEATTLE OPERA. THANKFUL



**JUNE 2019**

Donor Impact Report

# THANK YOU

When you give to Seattle Opera, you're creating great mainstage performances like *Carmen* and *Il trovatore*. You're contributing to the continuation of this art form by supporting new works like *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*. You're introducing this magnificent art form to youth of all ages. And you're connecting extraordinary music and drama to diverse communities. Learn how you're helping to share more stories and more music with more people in this latest Impact Report.

[SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/GIVE](https://seattleopera.org/give)



Adam Lau as Kōbun Chino Otagawa in *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*.

## ARTIST CONNECTIONS

Seattle Opera has been there for me since the beginning of my professional career. As I was transitioning out of the young artist world, Seattle Opera reached out and took a chance on me. We started small and grew from there. Each role helped to expand my vocal and dramatic skills. I'm so grateful for the opportunities the company has given me."

—Adam Lau, Bass

# DEAR FRIENDS



"I view you, above all, as great citizens, united with us to fulfill our mission to make opera available and accessible to everybody in our community."

During the recent spring break, the new Opera Center was truly alive with the sound of music! Not only did rehearsals for *Carmen* get under way in our main rehearsal studio, we also had over 30 school students participating in our Opera Camp. In the past, space constraints meant that our camps used to take place offsite. This time, the activity was spread all around the building as the students developed a wide range of opera skills. The camp culminated in a presentation that was attended not only by the parents of the participants, but also by a large contingent of Seattle Opera staff, who had never previously had the chance to experience this side of our work. If ever proof were needed that Seattle Opera's work and range extends far beyond our productions on the stage of McCaw Hall, then this was it!

These days, an arts organization is far more than a mere purveyor of high-quality entertainment. It plays an integral part in the life of its community, and is duty-bound to offer a wide range of different programs to meet a rapidly changing audience base. All this work would, quite simply, not be possible were it not for the extraordinary support that we receive from you, our donors. It is easy for an impact report to detail the qualitative and quantitative data that emerges from our programs as a direct outcome from your donation to Seattle Opera, but the true impact of your gifts is much more profound. I view you, above all, as great citizens, united with us to fulfill our mission to make opera available and accessible to everybody in our community. So it is with deep appreciation and gratitude that I thank you for supporting the productions and new initiatives established during my time here at Seattle Opera.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aidan Lang".

Aidan Lang, General Director

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

## OPERA AND CIVIC DIALOGUE

This season, Seattle Opera continued its Community Conversations, a series of public forums for open dialogue and new ideas in opera, that highlight perspectives that have not had an opportunity to be heard. Through these conversations, Seattle Opera is adding new points of view, diverse people, and stories, to the fabric of our art form.



## RECLAIMING THE STORY

The recent production of *Carmen* was an opportunity to explore conventional Western depictions of women of color in opera and theater, who are often hypersexualized, exoticized, and ill-fated. Visual artists Perri Rhoden and Aramis O. Hamer, along with performer/activist Sara Porkalob, joined professors Naomi André, University of Michigan, and Michelle Habell-Pallán, University of Washington, in a discussion about these and other stereotypes. “*Carmen* inspires us to examine how women artists of color respond to these tropes and their legacies, be it rejecting them, subverting them, or reclaiming them. These artists are taking back power by creating art in their own image,” said Alejandra Valarino Boyer, Seattle Opera’s Director of Programs and Partnerships. To read a recap of this event, visit [seattleopera.org/blog](http://seattleopera.org/blog).



## TOO MUCH TECH?

KUOW’s podcast producers Carolyn Adolph and Joshua McNichols moderated “Tech Has Changed Seattle. Now What?,” a panel discussion that investigated the ramifications of the region’s tech culture on the artistic fabric of our city, for better or worse. The panel featured Cynthia Brothers, creator of *Vanishing Seattle*; Tasia Endo, Manager of Interpretive Technology at Seattle Art Museum; Waxie Moon, a gender-bending burlesque performer; and Michael “Wanz” Wansley, a singer, musician, and software engineer. Presented on March 2 during the mainstage performances of *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, the panel “provided a platform for civic conversation that’s been happening with the expansion of the technology industry in Puget Sound,” said Aidan Lang, Seattle Opera’s General Director.

Want to attend a Community Conversation? Be sure to check your email inbox or check [seattleopera.org/calendar](http://seattleopera.org/calendar).

# CINDERELLA GOES TO YAKIMA

Children’s opera fills need for bilingual experiences



Set among displays of historic artifacts and photographs in the Yakima Valley Museum, first- and second-graders watch as *Cinderella* caters to the demands of her self-centered stepsisters and scheming stepmother. “Y la comida, tengo hambre. We’re so hungry,” sing the sisters.

The 220 children ventured to the museum to see *Cinderella en España*, a dual-language opera that retells the classic fairy tale. The production provides a lively modern-day take on this deceptively simple story about the beauty of kindness and the ugliness of mistreating others.

As the students laughed at the antics of the stepsisters, prince, and fairy godmother, many of them were experiencing a live performance presented in Spanish for the first time. “It’s wonderful that our students can experience live music and acting in Spanish, the language spoken in their homes,” said Melissa Singletary, a teacher at John Campbell Primary School.

Recent census data show that nearly half of the residents are of Latinx origin, so the need for multilingual experiences is important to members of the community. “The bilingual opera fits the rapidly changing

community profile,” said Peter Arnold, the museum’s Executive Director. “Having this performance helps us achieve an important objective—presenting more programming that’s relevant to our Spanish-speaking communities.”

*Cinderella en España* was also performed at two local elementary schools. “Our kids are amazingly excited to have the opera here,” said Deb Lavis, the principal at McClure Elementary School, where more than 550 students saw the show. Sitting with their legs crossed, the students were enchanted as the stepsisters tried on the crystal slipper. And students really laughed as Prince Paulo and Cinderella danced “The Floss” after the shoe was placed on Cinderella’s foot.

The spring tour continued to Wenatchee, Quincy, Cashmere, and Chelan. Other performances took place in Seattle, Shoreline, Graham, and Bellevue.

**From camps and touring productions to intensive training opportunities, we are committed to creating unique opera experiences that connect artists to community members of all ages. Your investment in Seattle Opera makes opportunities like these possible. Thank you.**

# NEW OPERA THRILLS SEATTLE



The success of *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* is the result of numerous collaborators—the composer and librettist, the conductor and stage director, the singers and musicians, the production designers and technical crew, and many others. It's also the result of your donations! Your Annual Fund support, coupled with designated support from endowed funds like the New Works Fund at Seattle Opera Foundation, support the development of new operas. The New Works Fund was created by arts patron Laura Lundgren so that Seattle Opera has the resources to commission new opera.

And next season we're proud to present *Charlie Parker's Yardbird*, a new opera about the jazz innovator written by composer Daniel Schnyder and librettist Bridgette A. Wimberly. *Charlie Parker's Yardbird* has been performed by Opera Philadelphia, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Arizona Opera. We're thrilled to host the West Coast premiere of this dynamic new work Feb. 22—Mar. 7, 2020.

**Thank you for inspiring new works that bring new stories and new ideas to life!**

# SO MUCH FUN!

The Big Opera Party was a tremendous success! We are grateful for the 330 arts lovers who joined the one-night-only evening of immersive opera experiences! Together, we raised over \$400,000 to support Seattle Opera programs and productions.



“I have been a classical Italian opera enthusiast for over 65 years. I took a chance on *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*. After all these years, I have now experienced a modern opera that not only opened my eyes—but absolutely held me enthralled!”

—Seattle Opera Subscriber



Held throughout the Opera Center and among the beautiful *Carmen* set on the McCaw Hall stage, the evening featured dinner, dancing, a live auction of exclusive opera experiences, and a post-dinner Bash!

# SEATTLE OPERA.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**OPERA TALKS WITH JONATHAN DEAN**

Tuesday, July 23

**VERDI SING-ALONG**

Saturday, July 27

**OPERA CENTER OPEN HOUSE**

Saturday, September 28

# SO PARTY

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