Welcome aboard Seattle Opera’s virtual presentation of Flight, Jonathan Dove’s dark comedic opera about unexpected human connections under very special circumstances. Love, hatred, attraction, isolation, forgiveness and more are on full display in an airport departure lounge during a circumstances beyond our control. To create the set, we filmed the production in The Museum of Flight. From conception to completion, Matt Hayes, the president of the museum, and his staff were extremely supportive and enthusiastic. I want to thank them for their assistance and cooperation through all the twists and turns of this production.

Flight is one of those few new operas to receive worldwide success. First performed in 1998 at the Glyndebourne Festival, subsequent productions have taken place throughout Europe, the United States, and Australia. Flight was inspired by the real-life story of Mehran Karimi Nasseri, an Iranian stranded in Terminal 1 of Charles de Gaulle Airport for 18 years. The opera also captures the comings and goings of airport workers and global travelers. Interestingly, Flight premiered while Nasseri was living in the airport. What’s more, his story inspired Steven Spielberg’s 2004 film The Terminal featuring Tom Hanks.

In the last several years, Seattle Opera has staged The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs, The Falling and the Rising, As One, Charlie Parker’s Yardbird, and other contemporary works as an indication of the company’s interest and commitment to introducing new stories, new characters, new music, and new perspectives. We’re also committed to the development of new storytellers and their creation of new stories. These are the hallmarks of the Jane Lang Davis Creation Lab, a new multi-year initiative supported by the generosity of the Friday Foundation. The first cohort is comprised of 17 young (ages 18-30) composers and librettists from diverse backgrounds and experiences who are mentored by librettists Jerre Dye and Tazewell Thompson, actress Aishé Keita, and composers Zach Redler and Kamala Sankaram. Concert presentations of their works-in-progress will take place later this year.

The performances of these new works reminds me that some of today’s most beloved titles were once works-in-progress. Take as an example Madame Butterfly, which Puccini took three months to overhaul after it premiered. Mozart’s Don Giovanni is another example. He famously wrote new parts to fit different singers. Truly experiencing a new operatic work requires curiosity, openness, and a sense of adventure; the same requirements needed for travel, be it a hour’s drive by car or an international flight across numerous time zones. I’m glad you’re joining us for this journey.

So as we prepare for departure, take time to grab a beverage and a snack. Then make yourself comfortable. Everyone at Seattle Opera wishes you an enjoyable Flight.

Christina Scheppelmann

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to Flight, a new opera filmed on location in an unexpected and dynamic place: Seattle’s own Museum of Flight! Our artistic team, working out of the box with the staff at the museum, has once again imagined the possibilities of our season in the age of COVID. We are deeply grateful for the assistance and ingenuity of the team at the Museum of Flight. Together, we are landing a Flight that artistically and literally takes opera to entirely new places!

This rewarding collaboration is an example of Seattle Opera’s ongoing commitment to community. Another recent example was last season’s production of The Falling and the Rising, a chamber opera that told a story of military service, sacrifice, and resilience. That performance featured a volunteer community chorus of veterans from Path with Art, a local non-profit organization that transforms the lives of people recovering from trauma by harnessing the power of creative engagement. After seeing The Falling and the Rising, a musical colleague from the family of a nationally recognized composer turned to me tearfully, saying, “This is what opera can be!”

In the same way, our work with the Museum of Flight is not just good citizenship, it is good art. Good opera serves and elevates the community. That is why our Vision Statement directly references the community: Seattle Opera is a cultural icon that speaks to all the communities of, and visitors to, the Puget Sound region.

Projects like Flight reveal Seattle Opera to be more than a presenting organization. We strive to be good neighbors and friends to the community that surrounds us. We work closely with KING FM, JazzED, Bloodworks NW, and other organizations, to name a few. We even have a department dedicated to Programs and Partnerships in the community.

Seattle Opera’s lasting commitment to community is physically manifested in the concrete and steel of the Opera Center building adjacent to McCaw Hall. Our audio system pipes opera to people walking in front of the building; our large windows invite curious onlookers to see the behind the scenes work of opera; our meeting and rehearsal spaces are used by community organizations both large and small. The Opera Center is a touchpoint for the entire city.

Above all, we serve and elevate our many audiences by producing extraordinary opera. Opera that inspires and illuminates. Opera that changes hearts and minds. Opera that tells big, powerful stories about the famous and the not-so-famous.

Which brings us back to Flight—a story about one stranded traveler, but also about courage, empathy, the human condition. The Museum of Flight’s airplanes, control tower, and grand staircase are the perfect settings for this story. Once again, community collaboration adds to the impact of the art. And art, in turn, serves the community.

I hope that you will learn more about this new opera by exploring this program for a synopsis, a message from the composer Jonathan Dove and an essay from the director Brian Staufenbiel. I think you will be as excited as I am to lift off on an unforgettable Flight!

Lesley Chapin Wyckoff, President
Seattle Opera Board of Directors
Seattle Opera deeply appreciates the leadership and staff at the Museum of Flight. Your collaborative spirit and ingenuity made this production of *Flight* possible. We applaud your commitment to art, culture, history, and science.

**THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!**

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*Boeing*
Music by Jonathan Dove†
Libretto by April De Angelis†

World Premiere: Glyndebourne Opera House, 1998
Seattle Opera Premiere

CAST (In order of vocal appearance)

Refugee .......................................................... Randall Scotting†
Controller .......................................................... Sharleen Joynt†
Bill ................................................................. Joshua Kohl†
Tina ................................................................. Karen Vuong†
Older Woman .................................................... Margaret Gawrysiak†
Steward ............................................................ Joseph Lattanzi†
Stewardess ......................................................... Sarah Larsen†
Minskman ......................................................... Aubrey Allicock
Minskwoman ...................................................... Karin Mushegain†
Immigration Officer ................................................. Damien Geter†
Assistant Stage Conductor ......................................... Philip A. Kelsey†
Assistant Stage Director ........................................... Michael Janney†
Stage Manager ..................................................... Yasmine Kiss
Music Preparation .................................................. David McDade, Jay Rozendaal†
Assistant Stage Managers ........................................... Alex Wommack, Cristine Reynolds†
Location Scout ............................................................ Doug Provost†

THE STORY

Act I
In an airport terminal, the Controller sits in her tower, observing a Refugee who has been living there for weeks. People start to arrive for their flights: a married couple, Bill and Tina, are going on holiday to rediscover romance; the Older Woman is meeting a young man whom she met on holiday; the Steward and Stewardess go about their business—some of the time. Another couple arrives, almost late for their flight to Minsk, Belarus. The Minskwoman is pregnant. At the last moment, she refuses to board the plane and the Minskman leaves without her. The Refugee offers her a magic stone to comfort her. The travelers are preparing to depart when the Controller announces that, because of storms, flights are indefinitely delayed.

Act II
That night, a storm rages. Everyone tries to sleep—either in pairs or alone—and each secretly approaches the Refugee, fascinated by his magic stone. He gives them all what each thinks is a unique stone and they make wishes. Bill is restless and seeks out the Stewardess, but finds the Steward instead: they go off to explore the control tower. The women and the Refugee decide to get drunk, and, as they become more garrulous, the women discover that each of them has ‘the’ stone. They vent their anger, with dire consequences for the Refugee. The consequences of Bill and the Steward’s explorations are no less cataclysmic.

Act III
Flights resume the next morning. The Minskman returns; he could not bear to be separated from his wife. Bill and the Steward have a surprise for their partners. Tina has a nasty surprise for Bill. The Refugee has a surprise for the women. The Minskwoman has a surprise for everyone. When the Refugee tells his story, even the Immigration Officer has a surprising reaction. Flights are announced and under the Controller’s watchful eye, the airport returns to normal...

SEATTLE OPERA ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE MUSEUM OF FLIGHT, MCCAW HALL, AND THE OPERA CENTER ARE LOCATED ON THE ANCESTRAL HOMELAND OF THE COAST SALISH PEOPLES. AS SEATTLE OPERA STRIVES TO CREATE RESPECTFUL PARTNERSHIPS THROUGHOUT THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST, WE HOPE TO CONTRIBUTE TO COLLECTIVE HEALING AND TRUE RECONCILIATION.
I had written the opera I wanted to see, but I had no idea how an audience would react. Unlike many operas, mine wasn’t based on a hit play or a best-selling novel or blockbuster movie (although six years later, the same true story would inspire Spielberg’s *The Terminal*)—and while I hoped people would relate to the experiences of a group of travelers stranded in an airport, I didn’t know if they would laugh at any of the jokes, or enjoy the music.

April De Angelis and I had set out to write a comedy—something I felt was in short supply in twentieth-century opera—but then came across the haunting tale of Mehran Nasseri, the Iranian refugee who had already been living for nearly a decade in Charles de Gaulle airport and would remain there until 2006. We didn’t try to tell his story, but his predicament had a mythic resonance which we found irresistible—and a magnetism which seemed to draw other stories to it.

*Flight* is now 23 years old, and has travelled the world. Each new production has shone a different light on it. It is wonderful to have been given the opportunity to write the piece we wanted to see, and discover that others wanted to see it too—and that everyone finds something different in it.

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Some are familiar, some violent, some funny. Like airports, they are crammed with messy human lives journeying to a final destination. To push the metaphor, operas can transport us all over the world and connect us to what is happening now. Indeed, today we’re seeing more and more new operatic stories that are relevant, inclusive, and speak to our modern world—even to the point of setting an opera about a true story that took place in an airport. Jonathan Dove’s *Flight* is a funny, poignant, and thought-provoking exploration of colliding souls, each of whom is looking for something better, searching for that elusive dream state we sometimes call happiness. At the heart of the show is a story inspired by that of Mehran Karimi Nasseri, an Iranian refugee who lived in the departure lounge of Terminal One in Charles de Gaulle Airport near Paris for almost eighteen years—from August 1988 until July 2006.

Empathy works in multiple directions. We can walk miles in many shoes. As you watch this narrative about a tired, desperate protagonist asking for help, you might imagine yourself behaving the same way as the travelers in the opera, inclined to say, “Please leave me alone,” or, worse, not even acknowledging he is there. Deftly, the celebrated librettist April De Angelis waits until the end of the opera—as our refugee is being arrested—to give him the opportunity to tell his story in the form of a brilliant aria. (*Flight* is an opera after all!) Only then, after the cast of disparate characters learns of his harrowing history, do they come to his aid. Their empathy has finally been roused. These are the same people who shunned him, beat him, and left him for dead. In *Flight*, you need to travel a thousand miles in his airborne wheel well and learn that his brother has fallen out, died—and taken his papers with him, stranding him in the airport indefinitely—before you know him. The cast of characters, stand-ins for humanity, give us hope, changing before our eyes, as they try to help and make a difference. They evolve, but only after a thousand miles of listening. *Flight* is a journey that all of us could, or maybe should, take more often.

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READ OUR BLOG WITH QUESTIONS YOU CAN THINK ABOUT AFTER WATCHING THE OPERA. WWW.SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/FLIGHTQUESTIONS
Jonathan Dove’s music has filled opera houses and delighted audiences of all ages on five continents. Throughout his career opera and the voice have been the central priorities in Dove’s output. Starting with his breakthrough opera Flight, commissioned by Glyndebourne in 1998, Dove has gone on to write almost thirty operatic works. His understanding of the individual voice is exemplified in his large and varied choral and song work. In 2010, A Song of Joys for chorus and orchestra opened the festivities at the Last Night of the Proms, and in 2016 an expanded version of Our Revesls Now Are Ended premiered at the same occasion. Dove’s commitment to community outreach and collaboration has resulted in numerous innovative projects, among them Tobias and the Angel, Life is a Dream, The Walk from The Garden, and The Monster in the Maze. Jonathan Dove was made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen’s 2019 Birthday Honors for services to music.

SONIA DAWKINS
Choreographer
Seattle Opera Debut
Engagements: Curious Incident of the Dog in Night Time, My Heart is the Drum (Village Theatre); Pieces of My Heart (Philadanco); Pullman Porter Blues (Seattle Repertory); Untitled (New York Theatre Ballet); Blueprint (SD Prism | Dance Theatre); Untitled (Taratibu Youth Association)

JONATHAN DOVE
Composer (London, England)
Seattle Opera Debut
Jonathan Dove’s music has filled opera houses and delighted audiences of all ages on five continents. Throughout his career opera and the voice have been the central priorities in Dove’s output. Starting with his breakthrough opera Flight, commissioned by Glyndebourne in 1998, Dove has gone on to write almost thirty operatic works. His understanding of the individual voice is exemplified in his large and varied choral and song work. In 2010, A Song of Joys for chorus and orchestra opened the festivities at the Last Night of the Proms, and in 2016 an expanded version of Our Revesls Now Are Ended premiered at the same occasion. Dove’s commitment to community outreach and collaboration has resulted in numerous innovative projects, among them Tobias and the Angel, Life is a Dream, The Walk from The Garden, and The Monster in the Maze. Jonathan Dove was made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen’s 2019 Birthday Honors for services to music.

LIESL ALICE GATCHECO
Costume, Hair and Makeup Designer (Seattle, WA)
Liesl Alice Gatcheco has worked as a fashion designer, wardrobe stylist, costume designer, makeup artist, and has been the Hair and Makeup Manager at Seattle Opera for more than 10 years. She also serves as the company’s photography stylist. Gatcheco is a graduate of Fashion Institute of Technology and Loyola Marymount University with degrees in Fashion Design and Art History and currently owns Eyebrowbaby, a permanent makeup studio in Ballard.

MARGARET GAWRYSIAK
Older Woman
Mezzo-Soprano (Geneseo, IL)
Seattle Opera Debut: Vera Boronel, The Consul (’14)
Previously at Seattle Opera: Madame Larina, Eugene Onegin (’20); Berta, The Barber of Seville (’17); Marcellina, The Marriage of Figaro (’16)
Engagements: Marcellina, The Marriage of Figaro (Opera Colorado); Old Lady, Candide (Tanglewood/Ravinia Festival); Madame Larina, Eugene Onegin (Atlanta Opera); Emma Jones, Street Scene (Virginia Opera); Mistress Hibbons, Scarlet Letter (Opera Colorado)

DAMIEN GETER
Immigration Officer
Bass (Chesterfield County, VA)
Seattle Opera Debut: Undertaker, Porgy and Bess (’18)
Previously at Seattle Opera: Colonel, The Falling and the Rising (’19)
Engagements: Undertaker, Porgy and Bess (Metropolitan Opera); Angelotti, Tosca (Eugene Opera); Composer, American Apollo (Washington National Opera); Sam, Trouble in Tahiti (Reno Chamber Orchestra); Reverend, Sanctuaries (Third Angle New Music)

SHARLEEN JOYNT
Controller
Soprano (New York, NY)
Seattle Opera Debut
Engagements: Controller, Flight (Pacific Opera Victoria); Cunegonde, Candide (Ravinia Music Festival); Musetta, La bohème (Vancouver Opera); Zerbinetta, Ariadne auf Naxos (Calgary Opera)

JOSHUA KOHL
Tenor (Fargo, ND)
Seattle Opera Debut: Brighella, Ariadne auf Naxos (’15)
Previously at Seattle Opera: Kudrjas, Katya Kabanova (’17)
Engagements: Soloist, Das Lied von der Erde (Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg); Fenton, Falstaff; Prologue/Peter Quint, The Turn of the Screw; Tom Rakewell, The Rake’s Progress; Des Grieux, Manon; B.F. Pinkerton, Madama Butterfly (Theater Freiburg)

SARAH LARSEN
Stewardess
Mezzo-Soprano (Minneapolis, MN)
Seattle Opera Debut: Mercedes, Carmen (’11)
Previously at Seattle Opera: The Composer, Ariadne auf Naxos (’15); The Secretary, The Consul (’14); Maddalena, Rigoletto (’14)
Engagements: Flora, La traviata (Metropolitan Opera); Dorabella, Così fan tutte (Mill City Summer Opera); Donna Elvira, Don Giovanni (Virginia Opera); Jan, Everest (Calgary Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City) Lauren Powell, The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs (Austin Opera, Atlanta Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City)
JOSEPH LATTANZI
Steward
Baritone (Atlanta, GA)
Seattle Opera Debut: Moralès, Carmen ('11)
Previously at Seattle Opera: Kuligin, Katya Kabanova ('17); Assan, The Consul ('14); Registrar, Madama Butterfly ('12)
Engagements: Silvio, Pagliacci (Atlanta Opera); Count Almaviva, The Marriage of Figaro (Cincinnati Opera); Hawkins Fuller, Fellow Travelers (Arizona Opera, Des Moines Metrop Opera); Don Giovanni, Don Giovanni (Jacksonville Symphony)

KARIN MUSHEGAIN
Minuskwoman
Mezzo-Soprano (Redlands, CA)
Seattle Opera Debut: Cinderella, La Cenerentola ('13)
Previously at Seattle Opera: Cherubino, The Marriage of Figaro ('16)
Engagements: Susanna, The Marriage of Figaro; Rosina, The Barber of Seville (Charlottesville Opera); Zerlina, Don Giovanni (Austin Opera); Hansel, Hansel and Gretel (Virginia Opera); Aldonza, The Man of La Mancha (Pensacola Opera); Zibaldona, Cinderella (Opera San Jose)

 RANDAL SCOTTING
Refugee
Countertenor (Grand Junction, CO)
Seattle Opera Debut: Athamas, Semele ('15)
Engagements: Apollo, Death in Venice (Royal Opera House); Hamor, Jephtha (Boston Baroque); Spirit/Cupid, Dido and Aeneas/Venus and Adonis (Florentine Opera); San Giovanni, San Giovanni Battista (Opera Omaha); Soloist, Carmina Burana (Springfield Symphony); Elioigabalo, Elioigabalo (West Edge Opera)

KYLE SEAGO
Video Director (Seattle, WA)
Seattle Opera Debut: The Elixir of Love ('20)
Engagements: Tacoma Symphony, ODESZA, Seattle Theatre Group

DUANE SCHULER
Lighting Designer (Elkhart Lake, WI)
Seattle Opera Debut: Norma ('94)
Previously at Seattle Opera: The Magic Flute ('17); Count Ory ('16); The Marriage of Figaro ('16)
Engagements: Cinderella (Dutch National Opera); Of Love and Rage (American Ballet Theatre); Manon Lescaut (San Francisco Opera); The Marriage of Figaro (Santa Fe Opera); Cinderella (Los Angeles Opera); Tosco (Lyrical Opera of Chicago)

BRIAN STAUFENBIEL
Director (San Francisco, CA)
Seattle Opera Debut
Engagements: Director/Production Designer, Elektra, Das Rheingold (Minnesota Opera); Das Rheingold (Arizona Opera, L’Opéra de Montréal); Director, Scare Pair (LA Opera); Director/Concept Designer, Everest, Harvey Milk (Opera Parallèle); Director/Concept Designer, Goodbye, Mr. Chips (Festival Napa Valley)

VISWA SUBBARAMAN
Conductor (Big Spring, TX)
Seattle Opera Debut
Engagements: We Shall Not Be Moved (Opera Philadelphia, Dutch National Opera); Voir Dire (Fort Worth Opera)

KAREN VUONG
Tina
Soprano (Los Angeles, CA)
Seattle Opera Debut: Trang/Nurse, Amelia ('10)
Engagements: Rusalka, Rusalka; Gänsemagd, Königskinder (Tiroler Festspiele); Fiordilig, Così fan tutte; Micaëla, Carmen; Almirena, Rinaldo (Oper Frankfurt)

ROBERTSON WITMER
Sound Designer (Seattle, WA)
Seattle Opera Debut: The Falling and the Rising ('10)
Previously at Seattle Opera: Don Giovanni ('21); Charlie Parker’s Yardbird ('20)
Engagements: Dracula (ACT Theatre); Greenwood (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater); Lyric Suite (Spectrum Dance Theater); The Great Leap (Portland Chinatown Museum)

ORCHESTRA

Violin I
Noah Geller, Concertmaster
Andy Liang, Asst. Concertmaster
Mae Lin
Mikhail Shmidt

Violin II
Natasha Bazhanov, Principal
Artur Girsks, Asst. Principal
Stephen Bryant

Viola
Wesley Dyring, Principal
Olivia Chew, Asst. Principal

Cello
Nathan Chan, Principal
David Sabee, Asst. Principal

Bass
Jordan Anderson, Principal

Flute/Piccolo
Jeffrey Barker, Principal
Zartouhi Dombourian-Eby

Oboe/English Horn
Stefan Farkas, Principal

Clarinet
Benjamin Lulich, Principal
Eric Jacobs

Bassoon
Seth Krimsky, Principal
Francine Peterson

Horn
John Turman, Principal
Jenna Breen

Trumpet
Alexander White, Principal
Christopher Stingle

Trombone
Sam Schlosser, Principal
David Lawrence Ritt

Tuba
John DiCesare, Principal
Timpani
James Benoit, Principal

Percussion
Michael Werner, Principal
Matthew Decker

Harp
Valerie Muzzolini, Principal

Piano/Celeste
Jay Rozendaal, Principal

Personnel Manager
Scott Wilson

Assistant Personnel Manager
Keith Higgins

‘Rotating members of the string sections are listed alphabetically. The Orchestra is composed of members of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra.

Stage crew work is performed by employees represented by I.A.T.S.E., Local, 15, 488, 887.
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Susan Coughlin
Josh Rodriguez
Paula Stokes

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RSVP@SEATTLEOPERA.ORG
206.389.7667

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021, 5 PM
PRESENTED BY SEATTLE OPERA

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY LAMAR LEGEND

ALSO FEATURING KENNETH KELLOGG,
CHERYSE MCLEOD LEWIS, KAREN VUONG

HOSTED BY
REBECCA M. DAVIS

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