

# SEATTLE OPERA.



spring 2021 season program guide

# TOSCA

**PREMIERES JUNE 4 AT 7 PM**  
**AVAILABLE THROUGH JUNE 27**



# FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR



It is my pleasure to welcome you to our streaming performance of Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*—our final production of this season. Without a doubt, this year has been the most unpredictable in our history in so many ways. Oddly, it seems fitting that we are ending the season with this title. As an upstart opera company, *Tosca* was Seattle Opera's very first production, opening on May 7, 1964. That show was our first experience hiring artists, designing stage scenery, and selling tickets. Similarly, this season was full of firsts, from filming and editing video productions to hosting Zoom events to mastering online streaming.

As our colleagues did 57 years ago, we met each obstacle head-on. Moreover, despite the complexities and uncertainties of the season, our commitment to our community never wavered. As you read the program, also please take time to discover how we have connected with artists, students, and neighbors across the region despite the pandemic. The latest impact report starts on page 16.

It has been an honor to lead Seattle Opera this season. Our resilience and creativity has been outstanding and impressive. Regardless of the challenges, we have moved forward. However, our success came with many sacrifices and hardships; we laid off 30 administrative staff members, losing more than 230 years of collective Seattle Opera experience. I am saddened by the loss of our colleagues and friends, and miss them. Those of us who remain at the opera will support the future endeavors of our former coworkers, whether in Seattle or wherever their careers take them.

For this production, we were granted access to St. James Cathedral to film parts of *Tosca*. Many thanks to The Very Reverend Michael Ryan and the cathedral's staff for their assistance.

When this opera premiered in Rome in 1900, the team of Puccini, Illica, and Giacosa followed their previous opera, *La bohème*, with a second hit show. It is indeed a magical theatrical masterpiece. And it is perfect from beginning to end. It is true musical theater. Under the baton of Kazem Abdullah, *Tosca* is the pitch-perfect ending to a season like no other in Seattle Opera's history.

We will launch our 2021/22 season the same way—with that other timeless masterpiece from Puccini, Illica, and Giacosa, *La bohème*, in October. The season continues with Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* and Tesori and Thompson's *Blue*, the 2020 winner for Best New Opera from the Music Critics Association of North America. The season wraps up with Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. In addition to these outstanding operas, we are excited to present one of today's most distinguished international operatic voices. Tenor Lawrence Brownlee—a Seattle Opera favorite—returns for a special one-night concert performance in April 2022. Brownlee is recognized globally for his interpretations of classic arias, familiar art songs, and uplifting spirituals.

Now is your opportunity to renew your subscription for this special 21/22 season. I invite you to subscribe today. Your staunch commitment to supporting our work ensures that we can overcome even the most unprecedented challenges. Everyone at Seattle Opera deeply appreciates your devotion and affection with the highest regards. Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christina Scheppelmann".

**Christina Scheppelmann**

# FROM THE PRESIDENT



Welcome to *Tosca*, a performance that is the culmination of months of hard work in a continually changing environment. Throughout this pandemic season, we have witnessed outstanding creativity, ingenuity, and flexibility at all levels of Seattle Opera. From virtual stage productions to online classes and streaming special events to continued programming with our partners, the staff has found ways of creating opera experiences that are imaginative, enjoyable, and safe.

You should know that Seattle Opera has the distinction of being among the few US opera companies to produce its originally planned titles of the season, adjusted to what circumstances allowed. What's more, we have provided much needed employment for vocalists, musicians, and behind-the-scenes professionals, offering more than 120 days of work since July 1, 2020. It truly has been a season of impressive discoveries.

Equally impressive has been the work of the Seattle Opera Board of Directors—a dedicated group of service-minded volunteers of which I am honored to be a member. They have been reliable, resourceful, and resilient throughout the season, ensuring that the company weathered the COVID-19 storm. Dr. George Counts, one of our newest board members, exemplifies these traits. A retired infectious disease physician, professor, and researcher, George stepped in when the company needed advice implementing and maintaining health and safety guidelines. However, this was not George's first "house call." For more than 30 years, he has served Seattle Opera as a volunteer, helping in various capacities. I invite you to read more about his career, life, and love of opera on page 22.

With you at our side, we have continued to create art in an unpredictable year. We have faced challenges head-on and kept singing. So as we lower the curtain on this season, now is the time to look ahead to our next. The day is coming when we will come together as a passionate opera-loving community to enjoy favorite composers (Puccini, Gluck, Mozart!) and experience a new piece (*Blue*) in the coming season. If you have not done so, I encourage you to look through your 21/22 renewal packet that was mailed to you. Please consider renewing your subscription today. And when you subscribe, take the opportunity to make a gift to Seattle Opera that is meaningful to you. Your contribution will fortify us against unforeseen obstacles, will help secure future vocalists, artists, and musicians, and will safeguard next season's artistic excellence.

Everyone at Seattle Opera is humbled by your unwavering support, and is eager to be together again with you to enjoy the thrill of opera in the months ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lesley Wyckoff".

**Lesley Chapin Wyckoff, President  
Seattle Opera Board of Directors**

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Seattle Board of Directors, Advisory Board and Honorary Lifetime Members have demonstrated superior leadership and assistance to Seattle Opera throughout the past season. Thank you for your sustained stewardship and guidance.

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# SEATTLE OPERA

## OUR 2021/22 SEASON

Begins Oct. 16, 2021

puccini

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The parishioners of St. James Cathedral, who enthusiastically embraced this production of *Tosca*, inspire Seattle Opera. The cathedral is an ideal setting for Giacomo Puccini's masterpiece. Thank you for graciously opening your doors to us.

Photo © Philip Newton





# TOSCA

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

Premiere: Rome, Teatro Costanzi, 1900

Seattle Opera Premiere: 1964

**Conductor** ..... Kazem Abdullah †  
**Stage Director** ..... Dan Wallace Miller  
**Production Designer** ..... Christopher Mumaw  
**Video Director/Editor** ..... Ken Christensen  
**Lighting Designer** ..... Duane Schuler  
**Costume Designer** ..... Liesl Alice Gatcheco  
**Hair and Makeup Designer** ..... Ashlee Naegle  
**Sound Designer** ..... Robertson Witmer  
**Chorusmaster** ..... John Keene  
**English Subtitles** ..... Jonathan Dean

## CAST (In order of vocal appearance)

**Angelotti** ..... Adam Lau  
**Sacristan** ..... Matthew Burns †  
**Cavaradossi** ..... Dominick Chenes  
**Floria Tosca** ..... Alexandra LoBianco  
**Baron Scarpia** ..... Michael Chioldi †  
**Spoletta** ..... Andrew Stenson  
**Sciarrone** ..... José Rubio †  
**Shepherd Boy** ..... Ellaina Lewis  
**Jailer** ..... Ryan Bede

**Assistant Conductor** ..... Philip A. Kelsey  
**Music Preparation** ..... David McDade, Jay Rozendaal  
**Production Stage Managers** ..... Yasmine Kiss  
**Assistant Stage Manager** ..... Cristine Reynolds, Catherine Costanzo

† Seattle Opera mainstage debut

Orchestral edition by Bryan Higgins, by arrangement with Motet Music Publishing Company.

**SEATTLE OPERA ACKNOWLEDGES THAT MCCAW HALL, THE OPERA CENTER, AND ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL 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.**



Photo © Philip Newton

## THE STORY

### Act I

Cesare Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner, finds refuge in his family's chapel located in a nearby cathedral. A painter, Mario Cavaradossi, comes to work on his portrait of the Mary Magdalene, inspired by a woman he observed praying in church the day before—the Marchesa Attavanti, Angelotti's sister. While the old Sacristan performs his duties, Cavaradossi compares the woman who inspired him to the beauty of his lover, the singer Floria Tosca.

When the Sacristan leaves, Angelotti emerges from hiding and asks for Cavaradossi's help. They are interrupted by the entrance of Tosca, who has come to see her lover and is suspicious of the whispering she heard from outside the locked cathedral door. Cavaradossi hides Angelotti and quiets Tosca's jealous fears. The two men hear a cannon shot—a signal that Angelotti's escape has been discovered. They flee to hide Angelotti at Cavaradossi's villa.

The Sacristan enters, excited to tease the liberal painter about the late-breaking news of Napoleon's defeat, but finds the cathedral empty. Scarpia, chief of police, enters, having tracked Angelotti to the church. Tosca returns to find her lover gone. Scarpia sows seeds of jealousy in Tosca, suggesting that her lover is having an affair with the Marchesa. Tosca rushes out to find the painter. Scarpia sends his minions to follow her, hoping that Tosca will lead them to Cavaradossi and Angelotti. He anticipates punishing the rebels and enjoying Tosca for himself.

### Act II

Scarpia, at dinner in his office, sends for Tosca. When his men bring in Cavaradossi, Scarpia interrogates the painter about Angelotti's whereabouts. He gets nowhere, and sends him off to the torture chamber adjacent to his office. Tosca appears, and Scarpia makes her listen to Cavaradossi's torture. She can't bear it and tells Scarpia where Angelotti is hiding. Scarpia's men rush off to capture Angelotti. A message arrives, correcting the earlier news: Napoleon has won, not lost, at Marengo. Cavaradossi, weakened by torture, explodes with a defiant cry of victory. Scarpia has him dragged off to prison.

Tosca is left to bargain with Scarpia for her lover's life. Scarpia suggests that he will exchange Cavaradossi's life for a moment of Tosca's love. Tosca fights him off and prays to God for help. Eventually, she yields to Scarpia's demands in exchange for a mock execution and a safe conduct pass for her and Cavaradossi. As he is writing the pass, Tosca's eyes light upon a dinner knife, and she plans an alternative solution to her dilemma.

### Act III

Before dawn, in his cell, Cavaradossi remembers a night of bliss in his garden with Tosca. Tosca arrives at the prison with the safe conduct letter and tells Cavaradossi how she dealt with Scarpia. She explains to him that they must proceed with the farce of a fake execution, and she instructs him on how to fall and how to pretend to die. But when the soldiers come for the firing squad, Scarpia has the last laugh. Tosca takes her quarrel with Scarpia before a higher judge.



# FIGHT FOR IT

By Jonathan Dean



Giacomo Puccini was a deeply competitive man, always pitting himself against other composers.

Asked why he wanted to write *Manon Lescaut* (1893) when Massenet's *Manon* (1884), on the same story, was making the rounds, Puccini famously explained, "Massenet feels the story as a Frenchman, with the powder and minuets. I shall feel it as an Italian, with desperate passion."

And what does Puccini do when he learns that Ruggero Leoncavallo, librettist/composer of *Pagliacci*, was interested in making an opera of *La bohème*? Leoncavallo even asked if Puccini wanted to collaborate with him, composing music to the *La bohème* libretto Leoncavallo had written. Puccini rejects the offer. And then, when Leoncavallo decides to compose *La bohème* himself, Puccini announces that he's writing a *La bohème* opera of his own. Understandably, Leoncavallo was furious.

As for *Tosca*, there are at least three different stories explaining how composer Baron Alberto Franchetti yielded the subject to Puccini; some stress Franchetti's magnanimity, others Puccini's conniving and duplicity. Whether Puccini considered Franchetti a serious rival or not, Puccini knew he and *Tosca* were a match made in theatrical heaven. Here was a heroine as competitive and mercurial as the man who gave her musical life.

If *Tosca* is a tragedy—and by the way, not everybody agrees on that, despite the opera's high death count—the heroine's fatal flaw is jealousy. In fact, her drive to keep rival lovers at bay is made clear well before she enters the stage. Her initial offstage cries of "Mario! Mario!" are typically sung with fear and anger in the voice. Mario explains those cries to Angelotti: "È una donna gelosa" ("It's a jealous woman"). She is so pathologically jealous, *Tosca* feels threatened because her artist boyfriend painted another woman? In my

experience, this scene usually makes contemporary American audiences laugh. But in Puccini's world, jealousy was no joke. Shortly after *Tosca* premiered, Puccini married his mistress of many years (whose husband had finally died). The new Mrs. Puccini promptly accused one of the servants of seducing Puccini, and hounded the poor girl until she died by suicide.

"That vixen! Let me at her," *Tosca* sings, raging about the Marchesa Attavanti, Angelotti's sister, who only appears onstage as Mario's portrait of Mary Magdelene. Is *Tosca* jealous, or just competitive? If Mario is worth anything, he's worth fighting for; and *Tosca* is nothing if not a fighter. She'll even invent a rival, if necessary, because life makes more sense to her when she's fighting with somebody.

This opera is structured as a series of duets, much to the chagrin of one of its librettists, Giuseppe Giacosa, who warned Puccini that that would become monotonous. It doesn't, because each of these duets is actually an entertaining competition. The affectionate friction between the two lovers is at least as compelling as the fierce and deadly battle between Scarpia and *Tosca*—a competition which, her final line implies, is going to continue in the next world.

## THE DUETS OF TOSCA

### Act 1: Mario vs. Tosca

Much of *Tosca*'s first act is an amusing love duet for Mario Cavaradossi, who's got a lot on his mind, and Floria Tosca, his unpredictable ladylove. She fumes, flirts, sins, begs forgiveness, and tries to plan a romantic evening; he's mostly interested in preventing her from discovering Angelotti (who's hiding about ten feet away).

### Act 1: Tosca & Scarpia

That act concludes with an extended dialogue in which Baron Vittelio Scarpia, hot on Angelotti's trail, fans the flames of *Tosca*'s jealousy, pulling on the loose thread that's the key to unravelling the entire fabric. It's not exactly a duet, in that they don't sing at the same time. But the music characterizes every twist and turn of the scene: Scarpia's menacing gallantry and oily hypocrisy, *Tosca*'s jealous fury and heartbreak. She finds Scarpia so contemptible, so unworthy of her attention, she dangerously underestimates him.

### Act 2: Scarpia vs. Tosca

Most of this scene is a tense game of cat-and-mouse between heroine and villain. Its final few minutes are some of the most compelling in all theater.

### The Trio

All three principals blend their voices only for about twenty seconds, at the heart of Act Two, following Mario's great cry of "Vittoria! Vittoria!" This scene is the purest opera—it's not in the play. (It'd be ludicrous in a play.) But those few seconds of wild emotional explosion form the keystone of Act Two.

### Act 3: Tosca & Mario

After Cavaradossi's beautiful aria of nostalgic despair, he and *Tosca* sing yet another duet, this one all about dawn and hope and the triumph of love. What makes it so poignant is, he knows this is a joke; there isn't going to be any fake execution. But rather than weeping in fear, or crying for vengeance, wouldn't you rather spend your last moments on earth singing an uplifting love duet?



# ARTISTS

## KAZEM ABDULLAH

**Conductor** (Indiana)

**Seattle Opera Debut**

**Engagements:** Conductor, *Hansel and Gretel* (Cape Town Opera); *Castor and Patience* (Cincinnati Opera); *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (Metropolitan Opera); *Malcolm X* (Michigan Opera Theater); Musical Director and Guest Conductor (Richmond Symphony Orchestra)

## RYAN BEDE

**Jailer**

**Baritone** (Tacoma, WA)

**Seattle Opera Debut:** Second Priest, *The Magic Flute* ('17)

**Previously at Seattle Opera:** Moralès, *Carmen* ('19); Fiorello, *The Barber of Seville* ('17); Jim Crowley, *An American Dream* ('17)

**Engagements:** Belcore, *The Elixir of Love* (Tacoma Opera); Schaunard, *La bohème* (Lyric Opera Northwest); Masetto, *Don Giovanni* (Opera Idaho); Bass soloist, Mozart *Requiem* (Symphony Tacoma); Jim Crowley, *An American Dream* (Opera Idaho)

## MATTHEW BURNS

**Sacristan**

**Bass-Baritone** (Richmond, VA)

**Seattle Opera Debut**

**Engagements:** Leporello, *Don Giovanni* (Michigan Opera Theater); Dansker, *Billy Budd* (Central City Opera); Bottom, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Virginia Opera); Bartolo, *The Barber of Seville* (Utah Opera)

## DOMINICK CHENES

**Cavaradossi**

**Tenor** (Las Vegas, NV)

**Seattle Opera Debut:** Pinkerton, *Madame Butterfly* ('17)

**Engagements:** Alfredo, *La traviata* (New National Theatre Tokyo); Turiddu, *Cavalleria rusticana* (New Orleans Opera); Pinkerton, *Madame Butterfly* (Opéra Royal de Wallonie-Liège); Carlo, *I masnadieri* (Valencia Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia); Pollione, *Norma* (Musica Viva Hong Kong)

## MICHAEL CHIOLDI

**Baron Scarpia**

**Baritone** (Pittsburg, PA)

**Seattle Opera Debut**

**Engagements:** Miller, *Luisa Miller* (Gran Teatre del Liceu); Giorgio Germont, *La traviata* (Utah Opera); Rigoletto, *Rigoletto* (Austin Opera); Tonio, *Pagliacci* (Palm Beach Opera)

## KEN CHRISTENSEN

**Video Director/Editor** (Seattle, WA)

**Seattle Opera Debut:** *Don Giovanni* ('21)

**Engagements:** Productions for King County Parks, Woodland Park Zoo, Bloomberg Businessweek, City of Tacoma

## JONATHAN DEAN

**Dramaturg** (Okemos, MI)

As Dramaturg, Jonathan Dean helps audience, staff, and artists access, understand, and interpret opera. Since 1997, he has created English captions for more than 75 operas. He helped build Seattle Opera's online presence and directed in-house publications including the book *50 Years of Seattle Opera* and a recording of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. His hour-long English adaptations for children of Wagner's *Ring* operas introduced young learners all over Washington to the passion and fascination of opera.

## LIESL ALICE GATCHECO

**Costume 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.

## JOHN KEENE

**Chorusmaster** (Lancaster, PA)

John Keene joined Seattle Opera for *Fidelio* in 2012 and serves as the company's Head of Music Staff and Chorus Master. In addition to preparing the chorus and overseeing all musical activities, Keene regularly accompanies singers in concert and conducted Seattle Opera's *As One*. He previously served as Head of Music and Chorus Master at Florida Grand Opera and as concert accompanist has appeared in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, and many other great halls.

## ADAM LAU

**Cesare Angelotti**

**Bass** (San Francisco, CA)

**Seattle Opera Debut:** Papa/Makoto Kobayashi, *An American Dream* ('15)

**Previously at Seattle Opera:** Masetto, *Don Giovanni* ('21); Alidoro, *Cinderella* ('19); Kōbun Chino Ootogawa, *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* ('19)

**Engagements:** Raimondo, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Lyric Opera of Kansas City); Basilio, *The Barber of Seville* (Portland Opera); Bass soloist, Verdi *Requiem* (Carnegie Hall); Tom, *Un ballo in Maschera* (Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo); Colline, *La bohème* (North Carolina Opera); Second Armed Man, *The Magic Flute* (Metropolitan Opera)

## ELLAINA LEWIS

**Shepherd Boy**

**Soprano** (Washington, DC)

**Seattle Opera Debut:** Strawberry Woman, *Porgy and Bess* ('18)

**Previously at Seattle Opera:** Chorus member, *Eugene Onegin* ('20); *Porgy and Bess* ('18, '11)

**Engagements:** Recitalist, *Intermezzo Recital Series* (Tacoma Opera); Soprano soloist, *Music from Home* (Lakewold Gardens)

## ALEXANDRA LOBIANCO

**Floria Tosca**

**Soprano** (St. Petersburg, FL)

**Seattle Opera Debut:** Donna Anna, *Don Giovanni* ('14)

**Previously at Seattle Opera:** Santuzza, *Cavalleria rusticana* ('20); Aida, *Aida* ('18)

**Engagements:** Chrysothemis, *Elektra* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Prima Donna/Ariadne, *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Austin Opera); Helmwige, *Die Walküre* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Tosca, *Tosca* (Portland Opera); Aida, *Aida* (Opera Carolina); Leonore, *Fidelio* (North Carolina Opera)

## DAN WALLACE MILLER

**Director** (Seattle, WA)

**Seattle Opera Debut:** *The Combat* ('17)

**Previously at Seattle Opera:** Director, *Three Singing Sisters* ('19); *Il trovatore* ('19)

**Engagements:** Director, *Carmen* (Kentucky Opera); Associate Director, *Silent Night* (Washington National Opera); Director, *Dido and Aeneas* (Central City Opera); Director, *Street Scene* (Young Artists of America)

## CHRISTOPHER MUMAW

**Production Designer** (Dayton, OH)

**Seattle Opera Debut:** Scenic Designer, *The Combat* ('17)

**Previously at Seattle Opera:** Associate Scenic Designer, *Il trovatore* ('19)

**Engagements:** Scenic Designer, *Admissions* (Seattle Public Theatre); Scenic Designer, *Howl's Moving Castle* (Book-It Repertory Theatre); Scenic Designer, *Sunset Baby* (ArtsWest Playhouse and Gallery)



## ASHLEE NAEGLE

**Hair and MakeUp Designer** (Las Vegas, NV)

Ashlee Naegle started at the Seattle Opera in 2007 as the Hair and Makeup Intern for *Giulio Cesare*. She returned several times from 2008 to 2017 as a Hair and Makeup Artist and Wig Assistant. During that time she worked as a Wig Assistant for Village Theatre, Seattle Repertory, and Act Theatre. In 2017 she made her Wig Master debut for *Madame Butterfly*. Since then she has been Seattle Opera's resident Wig Master and Lead Hair and Makeup Artist. She returns next season as Wig Master and Assistant Costume Hair and Makeup Manager.

## JOSÉ RUBIO

**Sciarrone**

**Baritone** (Vancouver, WA)

**Seattle Opera Debut**

**Engagements:** Hannah (Before), *As One* (Alamo City Opera); Alfio, *Cavalleria rusticana* (Juneau Lyric Opera, Vashon Opera); Mills, *The Diary of John Rabe* (Jiangsu Grand Opera Theater); Walter Harper, *Princess Sophia* (Orpheus Project)

## DUANE SCHULER

**Lighting Designer** (Elkhart Lake, WI)

**Seattle Opera Debut:** *Norma* ('94)

**Previously at Seattle Opera:** *Flight* ('21); *The Magic Flute* ('17); *Count Ory* ('16)

**Engagements:** Lighting Designer, *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); *Tosca* (Lyric Opera of Chicago)

## ANDREW STENSON

**Spoletta**

**Tenor** (Rochester, MN)

**Seattle Opera Debut:** Arturo, *Lucia di Lammermoor* ('10)

**Previously at Seattle Opera:** Don Ottavio, *Don Giovanni* ('21); Nemorino, *The Elixir of Love* ('20); Tamino, *The Magic Flute* ('17); Tonio, *The Daughter of the Regiment* ('13)

**Engagements:** Demetrius, *The Enchanted Island* (Metropolitan Opera); Almaviva, *The Barber of Seville* (Opera Colorado); The Steersman, *The Flying Dutchman* (Dallas Opera); *Opera in the Park* (Madison Opera); Pluto, *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Madison Opera); Bill, *Flight* (Dallas Opera)

## ROBERTSON WITMER

**Sound Designer** (Seattle, WA)

**Seattle Opera Debut:** *The Falling and The Rising* ('19)

**Previously at Seattle Opera:** Sound Designer, *Flight* ('21); *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*

Jennifer Bai

Leonid Keylin

Mikhail Shmidt, *Asst. Concertmaster*

John Weller

Arthur Zadinsky

## Violin II

Kathleen Boyer, *Principal*

Gennady Filimonov, *Asst. Principal*

Stephen Bryant

Linda Cole

Andrew Yeung

## Viola

Susan Gulkis Assadi, *Principal*

Olivia Chew, *Asst. Principal*

Wesley Dyring

Sayaka Kokubo

## Cello

Meeka Quan DiLorenzo, *Principal*

Nathan Chan, *Asst. Principal*

Roberta Downey

Vivian Gu

## Bass

Joseph Kaufman, *Principal*

Jonathan Burnstein

Will Langlie-Miletich, *Asst. Principal*

## Flute/Piccolo

Jeffrey Barker, *Principal*

## Oboe

Ben Hausmann, *Principal*

## Clarinet

Emil Khudyev, *Principal*

Laura DeLuca

## Bassoon

Luke Fieweger, *Principal*

## Horn

Mark Robbins, *Principal*

Jonathan Karschney

## Trumpet

Christopher Stingle, *Principal*

## Trombone

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## Timpani

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## Percussion

Michael Werner, *Principal*

## Harp

Valerie Muzzolini, *Principal*

## Keyboard

John Keene, *Principal*

Philip A. Kelsey

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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.*

# CHORUS

## Soprano

Jennifer Cross

Karen Early Evans

Ellaina Lewis

Lyndee White

## Alto

Erica Convery

YeonSoo Lee

Elizabeth Peterson

Melissa Plagemann

Lucy Weber

## Tenor

Nathan Barnes

Andrew Etherington

Stephen Wall

## Bass

Ryan Bede

Michael Dunlap

Julian Reisenhel

## SUPERNUMERARY

Katherine T. Tishler



# SEATTLE OPERA STAFF



## **CHRISTINA SCHEPPELMANN, GENERAL DIRECTOR**

Alejandra Valarino Boyer, *Director of Programs and Partnerships*  
Aren Der Hacopian, *Director of Artistic Administration and Planning*  
Kristina Murti, *Director of Marketing and Communications*  
Doug Provost, *Director of Production*  
Allison Rabbitt, *Director of Development*  
Jane Repensek, *Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operations Officer*  
Nancy Del Villar Vive, *Director of Human Resources*

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Ahana Sen, *Board Liaison & Executive Assistant to the General Director*

## **ARTISTIC**

Blaine Inafuku, *Associate Director of Artistic Planning*  
Jonathan Dean, *Dramaturg*  
Paula Podemski, *Company Manager*

## **Music**

John Keene, *Head of Music Staff & Chorusmaster*  
Philip A. Kelsey, *Assistant Conductor*  
David McDade, *Head of Coach-Accompanists*  
Jay Rozendaal, *Coach-Accompanist & Orchestra Librarian*  
Stephen Wall, *Chorus Personnel Coordinator*  
Beth Kirchhoff, *Chorusmaster Emeritus*

## **Stage Management**

Yasmine Kiss, *Production Stage Manager/Artistic Operation Manager*  
Catherine Costanzo, Adrienne Mendoza, Cristine Reynolds,  
Alex Wommack, *Assistant Stage Managers*

## **DEVELOPMENT**

Chris Burkett, *Individual Giving Officer*  
Julia Curns-Welsh, *Institutional Giving Officer*  
Matt Lider, *Individual Giving Officer*  
Stephanie Matsunaga, *Development Operations Coordinator*  
Erica McIntyre, *Development Operations Manager*  
Catherine Merlo, *Senior Individual Giving Officer*  
Isabel Thomas, *Research and Database Manager*  
Caroline Webb, *Stewardship & Events Manager*

## **PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Naomi André, *Scholar in Residence*  
T.J. Callahan, *Programs Communications Coordinator*  
Courtney Clark, *School Programs Manager*  
Sara Litchfield, *Youth & Family Programs Manager*  
Lokela Alexander Minami, *Community Engagement Manager*  
Miriam Anderson, Courtney-Savali Andrews, Jessica Andrews, Andrew R. Coopman,  
Samuel Corales, Damien Geter, Afarin Mansouri, Debra McKinney, Jessica Murphy Moo,  
Melissa Plagemann, Priscilla Salisbury, Shelly Traverse, Ta Wei Tsai, *Teaching Artists*

## **COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING**

Arryn Davis, *Marketing Coordinator*  
Gabrielle Nomura Gainor, *Communications & Public Engagement Manager*  
Glenn Hare, *Senior Communications Manager*  
Larisa Melkumova, *Graphic Designer*  
Meg Stoltz, *Digital Marketing Manager*

## **Sales & Services**

Michelle Carrasquillo, *Associate Director of Sales and Services*  
Greg Schell, *Ticketing Operations Manager*  
Corrie Yadon, *Patron Experience Manager*  
Debra McKinney, *Group Sales Coordinator*  
Katrina Finder, *Audience Services Lead*

## **PRODUCTION**

Alicia Moriarty, *Assistant Production Director*  
Mare Sasse, *Assistant Production Manager*  
Stephanie Sintef, *Production Coordinator*

## **Costume Shop, Hair and Make-up Studio**

Liesl Alice Gatcheco, *Costume, Hair and Makeup Director*  
Ashlee Naegle, *Wig Master*  
Cheryl del Rosario Lavarias, *Costume, Hair and Makeup Assistant*  
Carrie Steficek, *Wardrobe Head*  
Cristy Kazimour, *Assistant Wardrobe Head*  
Scott Arend, *Wardrobe Attendant*  
Denise Barry, *Lead Cutter*  
Miriam Goodman-Miller, *Crafts Supervisor*  
Kim Dancy, *First Hand*  
Rose Hope, *Stitcher*  
Ashlee Naegle, *Lead Principal Hair and Makeup Artist*  
Calli Dey, Trisha Partida, *Principal Makeup Artists*

## **Stage Crew**

Charles T. Buck, *Master Stage Carpenter*  
Jason Balter, Bruce Warshaw, *Assistant Master Stage Carpenters*  
Justin Loyd, *Head Flyman*  
Adam Lantz, Matthew Lint, Robert Millard, Tommy Price, Jason Wagoner,  
*Assistant Stage Carpenters*  
Jim Nash, *Master Electrician*  
Martin Cunningham, *Assistant Master Electrician*  
Molly Brindley, Chris Dimoff, Jim Gable, *Assistant Electricians*  
Chris Reay, *A/V Supervisor*  
Hannah Fenske, *Properties Master*  
Sandy Burke, *Assistant Properties Master*

Stage crew work is performed by employees represented by I.A.T.S.E., Local, 15, 488, 887







THE JEWEL TONES

# THANKS FOR TUNING INTO THE BIG OPERA SHOW!

Featuring music, laughter, special guests, and a little magic the Big Opera Show sparked generous donations and almost 1,000 views! The virtual fundraiser was hosted by Rebecca M. Davis and showcased performances by Karen Vuong, Jewel Tones, and Lawrence Brownlee, and the Seattle Symphony and Opera Players. Thank you for giving \$606,542 to support the artists and opera you love.



Photo © Sunny Martini

# SPRING 2021

Donor Impact Report



# SEATTLE OPERA.

Together we have continued our commitment to creating, entertaining, and educating.

## STREAMING OPERAS

The Elixir of Love,  
Don Giovanni,  
Flight, Tosca

## PATH WITH ART VETERAN'S CHOIR

## FREE VIRTUAL RECITALS

## FIVE ADULT ONLINE OPERA COURSES

## STREAMING VIDEO CONTENT

## JANE LANG DAVIS CREATION LAB & SEATTLE ARTS FELLOWSHIP

## YOUTH OPERA ONLINE PERFORMANCES

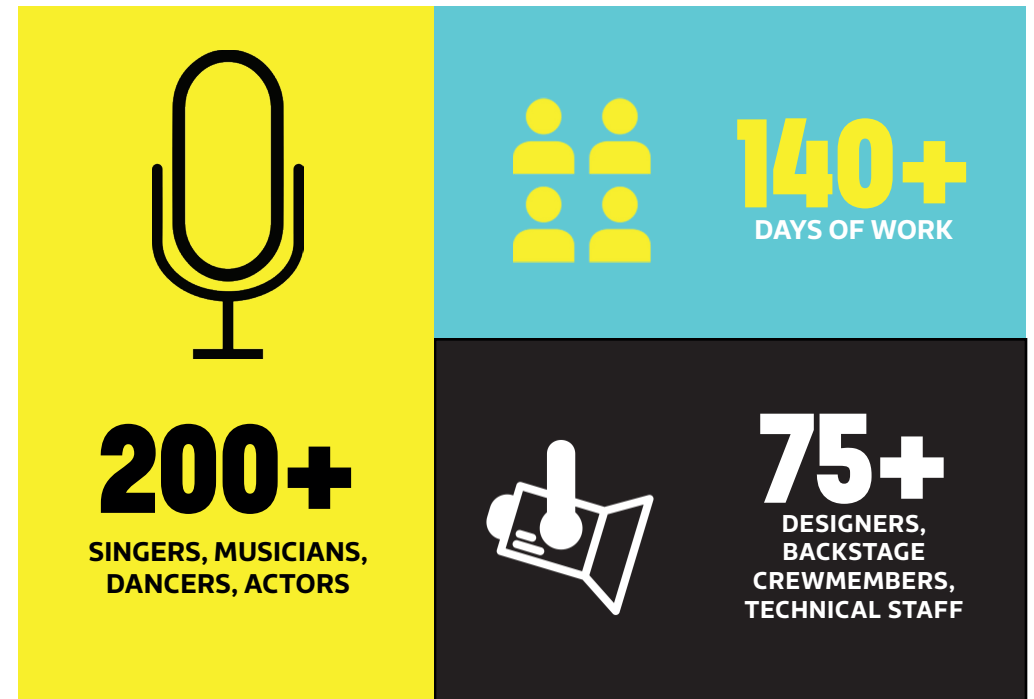
Brundibar  
La'ie'ikawai, Princess of Pali-Uli

...AND MUCH MORE!

# YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

With your support, Seattle Opera kept singers and artists working this season. This season, you were one of more than 2,500 households who collectively donated \$7.1M funds that have fueled the employment of opera staff, musicians, vocalists, and stage crew professionals!

## ARTIST EMPLOYMENT BY THE NUMBERS



“BEING A PART OF SEATTLE OPERA'S STREAMING OF *DON GIOVANNI*, FOR ME, IS LESS ABOUT THE OPERA ITSELF AND MORE ABOUT THE FORTITUDE OF THIS COMPANY. SEATTLE OPERA HAS USED ITS RESOURCES TO FACE THE DIFFICULTY OF THIS TIME. THEY ARE CONTINUING WITH THEIR MISSION TO CREATE ART AND SERVE THE COMMUNITY OF BOTH OPERA LOVERS AND ARTISTS DURING THIS CRISIS.”

—Kenneth Kellogg, Bass



# VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

## Is there a doctor in the house?

By Glenn Hare

Fortunately, for Seattle Opera the answer is YES!

Dr. George Counts, a Seattle Opera volunteer, a new member of the Board of Directors, and a retired infectious disease physician, is an important member of our COVID-19 prevention team, serving as a medical advisor and resource. In recent months, he has offered guidance on safety protocols and policies as well as how to respond to a presumptive positive test and more.

“His expertise has provided the assurance we need to do the right thing,” says Seattle Opera Director of Human Resources Nancy Del Villar Vivé.

That is because Counts’ professional experience spans more than 40 years of teaching and mentoring, researching and publishing, and developing and implementing clinical field trials. In addition to his academic career at the University of Washington and the University of Miami, he has led the infection control team at Harborview Medical Center and directed the bacteriology lab at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. He also held key positions at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), where he worked with Dr. Anthony Fauci.

During his time at the NIAID, he established HIV/AIDS drug testing trials nationwide and headed the Office of Research on Minority and Women’s Health, a new division

charged with increasing the participation of women and minorities in clinical trials.

After 15 years of retirement, Counts currently finds his skills in demand at Seattle Opera and at Horizon House, the retirement community where he lives. At Horizon House, he is part of a COVID prevention task force that meets daily. He also established a health advisory group comprised of three other physicians who offer advice to the task force and residents.

What’s more, Counts helps apply CDC and county guidelines to Seattle Opera, explains Jane Repensek, the opera’s Chief Operations Officer and Chief Financial Officer. “We consult with him on details surrounding our specific workplace circumstances. In one case, we had an urgent question that needed answers after business hours. Dr. Counts was contacted. He remained available throughout the evening, when public health officials and other resources were long offline for the day.”

Reared in segregated Oklahoma, Counts was one of the first African Americans to attend the University of Oklahoma, where he studied chemical engineering, then Russian history, before finding his passion for bacteriology. “I had a very hard time with the pre-engineering courses that first year,” he recalls. “Then I became fascinated with bacteria and medical science. Microbes can do all sorts of things—from fermenting beer to causing fatal diseases.”



It was also at this time when his interest in classical music deepened. A high school baritone horn player and member of the marching band, Counts was already involved in music. A college friend introduced him to opera and he saw his first live performance several years later. “It was after completing medical school,” he says. “I was a resident-in-training at Ohio State University at the time. I drove to Cleveland with two other interns to see a touring production of *Madama Butterfly* at Severance Hall.”

Counts’ enthusiasm for the art form goes beyond attending performances. He has been an eager Seattle Opera volunteer for nearly 30 years. He has served as an artist aide, driving visiting artists to and from the airport. He has helped in the costume shop and worked at the front desk. He has also assisted with lighting design, serving as a light walker for several productions. And he has appeared on stage as a supernumerary.

“I was in *Otello* and *Orpheus*,” he says. “That was thrilling!”

Now he brings a wealth of institutional knowledge and optimism to the Board of Directors. “During the pandemic, I’ve been impressed by the adroitness of Christina and the company. There are tremendous challenges ahead, but the way Seattle Opera has kept things going this season is impressive,” Counts says.

Seattle Opera is lucky to be able to turn to him.

“We all appreciate his willingness to share his expertise. His help has come at a time when we needed a steady guide in addition to resources we had available,” says Vivé.



# YOUTH LEARNING ONLINE



Students from this spring's Youth Opera Online attend a session with the Holocaust Center for Humanity to deepen their understanding of the context and significance of the youth opera Brundibar.

## Youth Singers Learn From Holocaust Center for Humanity

By Gabrielle Nomura Gainor

Amid a global pandemic and social unrest, *Brundibár*—a youth opera closely associated with the Holocaust—could easily hit an unsettling note. But Sara Litchfield was surprised to discover that this 1938 Czech work is a beacon of hope—a work of art for right now.

Litchfield, Youth & Family Programs Manager for Seattle Opera, led participants ages 7–18 in an 11-week online program from January to April. The final product, a streaming *Brundibár* performance, was recently viewed by participants and families. In addition to working with Seattle Opera staff, the young artists had the chance to learn from individuals with the Holocaust Center for Humanity, which provided guest speakers, a virtual tour of its museum, and more to deepen participants' understanding of the context and significance of the opera.

Because *Brundibár* is meant to be performed by youth, it offers an entry point for young children today to learn about the Holocaust. Written prior to World War II, the opera was performed more than 55 times in Terezín, where many Jewish artists were sent. This camp-ghetto supported a cultural community, as well as secret art-making, amidst Hitler's atrocities.

"At the height of human hatred, people held on to their humanity. It's a really incredible example of strength," said Julia Thompson, Holocaust Center for Humanity's Education Program Manager.

Youth participants with Seattle Opera had the chance to meet with two adult children of Terezín survivors over Zoom. One of the speakers shared how her father attended a *Brundibár* performance. Youth Opera Online participants met with Hana Kern to hear about her father's experience as a child in Terezín.

Because the program included both elementary and high school students, Seattle Opera's youth participants were divided up at times—with younger children receiving less specific information about the wartime genocide. But everyone was given space to process their emotions, including grief, anger, and sadness. They also had the chance to think deeply about their own interpretations of fairness and justice.

"I really liked how the Holocaust Center included kids in the discussion," Litchfield said. "They would ask, 'If you see people being treated unfairly because of their race or ethnicity today, what can you do?' The kids offered ideas like, 'You can go to a protest. You can treat that person with love. You can tell an adult.'"

At one point during the program, a teaching artist had participants draw a picture based on their feelings surrounding the Holocaust. Then, the group had a conversation about hope, resilience, and connection. The youth surrounded their original images of despair and heartbreak with uplifting images of butterflies, for example.

"The beauty of youth opera is that there is less of a set idea on what it has to be," Litchfield said. "Partnering with other cultural or historical groups such as the Holocaust Center provides such a meaningful experience for our young people. Both in moments of profound joy and in moments of deepest anguish, the arts allow us to process our feelings and experiences. Music and storytelling can bring us back to our humanity."

## ONLINE LEARNING BY THE NUMBERS



# 185

HOURS OF YOUTH  
OPERA ONLINE  
INSTRUCTION



# 2,776

VIEWS BY FAMILIES OF  
OPERA TIME AT HOME  
SINCE MARCH 2020



# 5

SOLD-OUT ADULT COURSES

# 152

PARTICIPANTS



# 47

OPERA TIME SESSIONS  
AT 10 EARLY  
LEARNING LOCATIONS



# ARTISTS & ADMINISTRATORS OF TOMORROW

THIS SEASON WE LAUNCHED TWO PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE.



Creation Lab artists from left to right: Mirabai Kukathas, Steve Tran, Aaron Jin, Brian Dang, Christopher Reed, Drew Swatosh, Elise Winkler, Erika Meyer, Chess Albaneze, James Washburn, Julia koyfman, Kyleigh Archer, Ei Yu, Larisa Juno, Rico Lastrapes, Paul Stovall, Rheanna Atendido.

## JANE LANG DAVIS CREATION LAB: NEW STORYTELLERS, NEW STORIES

Supported by the generosity of the Friday Foundation, the first cohort of Washington State composers and librettists is busy crafting new opera music and stories. Seventeen young artists from unique backgrounds are being coached 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 summer.

## SEATTLE ARTS FELLOWSHIP: A LEADERSHIP INVESTMENT

Seattle Opera, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Seattle Symphony, Seattle University, and KING FM are investing in the training of professionals who identify as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color. The Seattle Arts Fellowship is a new initiative that will prepare individuals for careers in arts administration. The paid fellowships will offer hands-on experience in Marketing, Community Engagement, and Artistic Planning beginning next season. They will receive mentoring, leadership, training, and networking opportunities.

# THANK YOU!



**“BRAVO TO SEATTLE OPERA! TODAY, I WATCHED DON GIOVANNI AND IT WAS SO WELL DONE! GREAT PRODUCTION VALUES, CAMERA WORK, COSTUMES. MOST OF ALL THE SINGING—TRIOS, QUARTETS, AND ARIAS WERE SUBLIME. GREAT VOICES AND GREAT CASTING AS USUAL! THANK YOU FOR GIVING US OPERA AGAIN. TRULY WONDERFUL.”**

—Seattle Opera Subscriber



# SEATTLE OPERA.

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## GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

We have been adding Seattle Opera fans this year from across the globe. Since April 2020, viewers from viewers from across the US and **58 countries have watched thousands of hours** of Seattle Opera video content, including recitals, mainstage productions, and educational programming. Our KING FM broadcasts have reached **240,000 listeners!**