Ring in the new year with a Russian romance

Experience a journey through poetry and tormented love in Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin*

January 11–25, 2020 at McCaw Hall
Tickets start at $35

SEATTLE—Leave everyday life in Puget Sound behind this January and step into the splendor of 1800s Russia. Seattle Opera’s *Eugene Onegin* will offer audiences lush orchestrations by Tchaikovsky, elegant ballroom dances, grand sets, and period costumes worthy of *The Last Czars* on Netflix.

Tchaikovsky, famous Russian composer of *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*, wasn’t a fan of grand opera when he wrote the opera *Eugene Onegin* (pronounced “oh-NYAY-ghin,” where the “G” is like “goose”) in 1877. He found works like Wagner’s *Ring* or Verdi’s *Aida* to be difficult for everyday people to relate to. Thus, he chose a ubiquitous work of Russian literature, Pushkin’s famous novel in verse *Eugene Onegin*, as the subject of his opera.

“Alexander Pushkin is to Russian what William Shakespeare is to English,” said Seattle Opera General Director Christina Scheppelmann. “Still today Russians read and study Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* in school—a story without a happily-ever-
after, but one that offers an incomparable journey through beauty, poetry, and romance."

In this story, Onegin, a restless socialite, rejects the passionate Tatyana after she declares her love for him. Trying to avoid Tatyana, Onegin ends up insulting his best friend Lensky, and killing him in the duel that results. Years later, and filled with regret, Onegin comes face-to-face with Tatyana once again. He realizes he loves her, but now, she’s married to someone else. While Tatyana still has feelings for Onegin, she chooses to remain faithful to her husband, breaking the heart of the man who once crushed her.

Alternating as the title character are two American baritones returning to McCaw Hall: **John Moore**, whose portrayal of Steve Jobs in *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* (‘19) was heralded as a great success by local and national critics, and **Michael Adams**, featured among “25 Rising Stars“ by *Opera News*. Starring as Tatyana are Finnish soprano **Marjukka Tepponen**, returning after her debut as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* (‘18), and **Marina Costa-Jackson**, who most recently wowed Seattleites in the Three Singing Sisters concert (‘19).

*Eugene Onegin* also features performances by returning artists: **Colin Ainsworth** (Lensky), **Margaret Gawrysiak** (Madame Larina), **Martin Bakari** (Monsieur Triquet), and **Misha Myznikov** (Zaretsky/A Captain). Making debuts are **Meredith Arwady** (Filipievna), **David Leigh** (Prince Gremin), and **Melody Wilson** (Olga)— who kicks off Seattle Opera’s Artist Recital series with a [special performance](#) at The Opera Center on January 17. The mezzo-soprano shows off her creative side with a program that includes Berlioz’s iconic *Les nuits d’été (Summer Nights)*, and Catalan composer Xavier Montsalvatge’s playful *Cinco canciones negras (Five Black Songs)*. Learn more about Seattle Opera’s new Artist Recitals series, which features opera artists of color in the 2019/20 season, at [seattleopera.org/recitals](http://seattleopera.org/recitals).

**Naomi André, Seattle Opera Scholar in Residence**, says Pushkin wrote many works that were later adapted for opera, including the historical drama *Boris*
Godunov. Tchaikovsky used Pushkin sources for his two most well-known operas—The Queen of Spades and Eugene Onegin. While the two men were very different from one another, both of their identities clashed with societal norms.

“Pushkin, whose great-grandfather is thought to have been born in Cameroon, had mixed-race ancestry that was largely kept hidden. Meanwhile, Tchaikovsky was tortured as a gay man in a repressed society,” André said. “Tchaikovsky could have identified with both of his leading characters—Onegin as someone who pushes women away or perhaps Tatyana—a person deeply in love who cannot have what she wants.”

Seattle Opera’s Eugene Onegin opens Saturday, January 11 and closes Saturday, January 25. Tickets start at $35 and are available online at seattleopera.org, by calling 206.389.7676, or in person at the ticket office located at the Opera Center, 363 Mercer Street. Box office hours are 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Monday–Friday. Groups save at least 20 percent: 206.676.5588 or groups@seattleopera.org

Eugene Onegin
Music by Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky
Libretto by Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky and Konstantin S. Shilovsky
In Russian with English captions
Premiere: Maly Theatre, Moscow, Russia, March 19, 1879
Previous Seattle Opera Performances: 1975, 1986, 2002

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performances: Jan. 11, 12, 15, 18, 19, 22, 24, & 25, 2020

Approximate Running Time: 3 hours, 10 minutes including two intermissions
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m

Cast:
Eugene Onegin          John Moore (Jan. 11, 15, 19, & 25)
                        Michael Adams (Jan. 12, 18, 22, & 24)
Tatyana                Marjukka Tepponen (Jan. 11, 15, 19, & 25)
                        Marina Costa-Jackson (Jan. 12, 18, 22, & 24)
Lensky                 Colin Ainsworth
Olga                   Melody Wilson*
Filipievna             Meredith Arwady*
Madame Larina          Margaret Gawrysiak
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<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prince Gremin</td>
<td>David Leigh*</td>
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<td>Monsieur Triquet</td>
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<td>Zaretsky/A Captain</td>
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<td>Conductor</td>
<td>Aleksandar Marković*</td>
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<td>Tomer Zvulun</td>
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* Company Debut

**2019/20 Season Sponsor: In memory of Karyl Winn**

**Production Sponsor: Seattle Opera Foundation**

**About Seattle Opera**

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