



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 2, 2020
Contact: Jen Rice, 206-285-5175, rice1234@yahoo.com
Press images: <https://seattleopera.smugmug.com/2021-Season>
Password: "press" (case sensitive)

Seattle Opera unveils 2020/21 Season:

*Cavalleria rusticana & Pagliacci, The Elixir of Love,
Don Giovanni, Flight, and Tosca*
McCaw Hall
Tickets start at \$35

SEATTLE—Seattle Opera has just unveiled its 2020/21 season—a year that highlights opera’s rich past, and its bold, diverse future. Audiences will be treated to beloved classics *Tosca* and *Don Giovanni*, as well as a contemporary work *Flight*, inspired by the true story of stateless refugee Mehran Karimi Nasseri, who was stranded for 18 years and forced to live in the Charles de Gaulle airport. The romantic comedy *The Elixir of Love* and the double-bill *Cavalleria rusticana & Pagliacci* will all be performed for the first time in decades.

This marks the first season to be programmed by **General Director Christina Scheppelmann**—one of only a few women to lead a major opera company in North America. Scheppelmann is proud to reveal the internationally acclaimed roster of artists she’s selected, including the “superb” (*Sidney Morning Herald*) **Saioa Hernández**. Hernández, who “won La Scala hearts [in] an instant love affair between soprano and audience” (*Bachtrack*), makes her company debut as Tosca. South African soprano and international rising-star **Vuvu Mpofo** will sing Adina in *The Elixir of Love*. Growing up in a small town, Mpofo taught herself to sing by

mimicking opera DVDs before auditioning for college as a self-taught artist. Scheppelmann is bringing in two visionary women, stage director **Brenna Corner** and conductor **Lidiya Yankovskaya**, to create a new *Don Giovanni*. The season also includes a debut for countertenor **David DQ Lee** as the Refugee in *Flight*. The Canadian Korean singer has made a name for himself: "With a powerful instrument and high As to rival any mezzo's, he reinterprets the same kind of voice as something voluptuous and exotic" (*The Globe and Mail*).

"Seattle Opera has a history of bringing exceptional talent to the stage and pushing the art form forward; that's a legacy I hope to both continue and expand on," Scheppelmann said. "My goal is to build enthusiasm for music and storytelling—not only through our performances at McCaw Hall, but through our programming at the Opera Center and throughout Washington State. The arts are so important for the identity of a great city like Seattle, and for the dynamic vitality and creativity of our entire region."

Naomi André, Seattle Opera Scholar in Residence, is excited about the upcoming season because it shows how beloved opera staples find additional relevance today with thoughtful staging and new interpretations.

"As Seattle has been a strong leader in promoting People of Color onstage (even when the race/ethnicity of the character is unspecified), it's especially nice to see South African Vuvu Mpofu making her debut here in *Elixir*," André said. "Also, with a more recent work such as *Flight* this season, we get to re-think issues around borders, immigration, migration, and belonging. The opera stage is one of the best places to sit in an uninterrupted space to think broadly and openly in my opinion."

The season kicks off in August 2020 with one-act operas presented together: ***Cavalleria rusticana & Pagliacci***. Two distinct yet complementary tales of jealousy, adultery, and revenge explore elemental emotions when affairs lead to crimes of passion. This performance will transform the public squares of southern Italy into a Greek theater-arena with *commedia dell'arte* costumes for Leoncavallo's

clowns. **Gregory Kunde**, one of the most accomplished singers on the opera stage today, returns to Seattle Opera as Turiddu in *Cavalleria*, alternating with award-winning Armenian tenor **Arsen Soghomonyan**. *Pagliacci* includes the return of **Vanessa Goikoetxea** (Micaëla in *Carmen*, '19) and **Joyce El-Khoury** (the title character in *Mary Stuart*, '16) as Nedda.

In October 2020, ***The Elixir of Love*** returns to Seattle Opera for the first time in more than 20 years. With winking humor and charming characters, this *bel canto* masterpiece calls for the return of two high-flying tenors: **Liparit Avetisyan** (the Duke in *Rigoletto*, '19), and **Matthew Grills** (Don Ramiro in *Cinderella*, '19) as the love-struck peasant Nemorino. On Oct. 23, between *Elixir* performances, Seattle Opera presents a concert with two special, internationally acclaimed singers: **Angela Meade & Jamie Barton in concert with John Keene, pianist**. Fresh from acclaimed performances at the Met and Carnegie Hall, the soprano and mezzo-soprano return to McCaw Hall following Seattle Opera debuts in Verdi's *Il trovatore*, '19 (Meade) and *Nabucco*, '15 (Barton). Along with John Keene—pianist and Seattle Opera chorusmaster—the singers will delight audiences in this mixed-genre performance.

Then in January 2021, Seattle Opera presents Mozart's ***Don Giovanni***. Staged by Brenna Corner and conducted by Lidiya Yankovskaya, this portrait of the ultimate male predator includes debuts of bass-baritones **Daniel Okulitch** (lauded as "flat out brilliant" by *Opera News*) and **Jared Bybee** (2016 George London Foundation Vocal Competition awardee).

The Seattle Opera premiere of ***Flight*** (February 2021) will offer a comic, complex, and deeply human story based in part on true events. The 1998 opera depicts an omniscient air traffic controller who watches over a bustling departure lounge with jaded flight attendants, a couple on vacation, a mysterious older woman, an Eastern European diplomat, and his expectant wife, all of whom must wait out a storm. Sharing the role of the Refugee with David DQ Lee is American countertenor **Randall Scotting**, who returns following his debut as Athamas in *Semele* ('15).

Since its premiere, *Flight* has been performed close to 100 times around the world. Composer **Jonathan Dove's** catalog of 28 often-performed works includes full-length mainstage operas, operas for children, television operas on the death of Princess Diana and the first moon landing, and a pair of micro-operas lasting under 15 minutes.

"Airports have always fascinated me as a location," Dove told *The Julliard Journal* in an interview. "People arrive at the airport with various hopes and fears. They think when they travel away they will start a new life. But this was written pre-9/11, when air travel was much more carefree. One thing I noticed while watching a recent production of *Flight* in London was that it felt curiously more topical."

Seattle Opera's 2020/21 season concludes with the ultimate diva opera: Puccini's timeless ***Tosca***. A fiery prima donna struggles to free her true love from the clutches of a sadistic, lustful police chief. Filled with iconic arias and impressive moments, it's the ideal performance for anyone who loves epic music and drama. Alternating with Saioa Hernández in the title role is another international headliner: the "splendid" (*Das Opernglas*) Armenian soprano **Karine Babajanyan**, whose "voice is strong and appealingly colored," and who "sings with confidence and intelligence" (*OPERA*).

Seattle Opera Ticket Information: Subscriptions on sale now. Subscription ticket prices start at \$215. Opera Ticket Office: 206.389.7676 or 800.426.1619. Online orders: seattleopera.org/subscribe or in person at the box office located at the Opera Center, 363 Mercer Street. Mainstage performances take place at Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, 321 Mercer Street. Young professionals ages 21–39 who join BRAVO! and students under 18 save 50 percent on tickets.

**2020/21 Season Sponsor:
Barbara Stephanus**

Cavalleria rusticana & Pagliacci

Cavalleria rusticana

Music by Pietro Mascagni

Libretto by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci

Premiere: May 17, 1890 at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome

Previous Seattle Opera Performances: 1966, 1983, 1990

Pagliacci

Music and libretto by Ruggero Leoncavallo

In Italian with English captions

Premiere: May 21, 1892 at the Teatro Dal Verme in Milan

Previous Seattle Opera Performances: 1966, 1974, 1983, 2008

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Performances: August 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 19, 21, & 22, 2020

Approximate Running Time: 3 hours, including one intermission.

Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m

Cast:

Santuzza (<i>Cav.</i>)	Melody Moore (Aug. 8, 12, 16, & 22) Marcy Stonikas (Aug. 9, 15, 19, & 21)
Turiddu (<i>Cav.</i>) and Canio (<i>Pag.</i>)	Gregory Kunde (Aug. 8, 12, 16, & 22) Arsen Soghomonyan* (Aug. 9, 15, 19, & 21)
Nedda (<i>Pag.</i>)	Vanessa Goikoetxea (Aug. 8, 12, 16, & 22) Joyce El-Khoury (Aug. 9, 15, 19, & 21)
Alfio (<i>Cav.</i>) and Tonio (<i>Pag.</i>)	Michael Mayes
Mamma Lucia (<i>Cav.</i>)	Tichina Vaughn
Lola (<i>Cav.</i>)	Sarah Larsen
Silvio (<i>Pag.</i>)	Will Liverman
Beppe (<i>Pag.</i>)	Andrew Stenson
Conductor	Oksana Lyniv*
Director	Guy Montavon*
Set Designer	Hank Irwin Kittel*
Costume Designer	Bianca Deigner*

* Company Debut

**Production Sponsor:
Kreielsheimer Foundation**

The Elixir of Love

Music by Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto by Felice Romani

In Italian with English captions
Premiere: May 12, 1832 at the Teatro della Canobbiana in Milan
Previous Seattle Opera Performances: 1969, 1985, 1998

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performances: October 17, 18, 21, 24, 25, 28, 30, & 31, 2020

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours, 45 minutes including one intermission
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m

Cast:

Adina	Madison Leonard (Oct. 17, 21, 25, & 31) Vuvu Mpofu* (Oct. 18, 24, 28, & 30)
Nemorino	Liparit Avetisyan (Oct. 17, 21, 25, & 31) Matthew Grills (Oct. 18, 24, 28, & 30)
Dulcamara	Peter Kálmán (Oct. 17, 21, 25, & 31) Patrick Carfizzi (Oct. 18, 24, 28, & 30)
Belcore	Michael Adams
Conductor	Carlo Montanaro
Director	Stephen Lawless*
Set and Costume Designer	Ashley Martin-Davis*

* Company Debut

***Angela Meade & Jamie Barton in concert with John Keene,
pianist***

A special concert featuring a mixed-genre program with a variety of favorite opera arias and rarities. One night only!

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performance: 7:30 p.m., October 23, 2020

Don Giovanni

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte

In Italian with English captions
Premiere: Oct. 29, 1787, National Theatre in Prague
Previous Seattle Opera Performances: 1968, 1979, 1991, 1999, 2007, and 2014

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Performances: January 16, 17, 20, 23, 24, 27, 29, & 30, 2021

Approximate Running Time: 3 hours, 25 minutes including one intermission
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m

Cast:

Don Giovanni	Daniel Okulitch* (Jan. 16, 20, 24, & 30) Jared Bybee* (Jan. 17, 23, 27, & 29)
Donna Anna	Vanessa Goikoetxea (Jan. 16, 20, 24, & 30) Laura Wilde* (Jan. 17, 23, 27, & 29)
Leporello	Michael Sumuel* (Jan. 17, 23, 27, & 29)
Don Ottavio	Edgardo Rocha (Jan. 16, 20, 24, & 30) Miles Mykkanen* (Jan. 17, 23, 27, & 29)
Donna Elvira	Keri Alkema (Jan. 16, 20, 24, & 30) Helena Dix* (Jan. 17, 23, 27, & 29)
Zerlina	Jasmine Habersheim*
Masetto	William Thomas*
Commendatore	Kenneth Kellogg*
Conductor	Lidiya Yankovskaya*
Director	Brenna Corner*
Scenic Designer	Mimi Lien*
Costume Designer	Erik Teague*
Lighting Designer	Robert Wierzel

* Company Debut

Production Sponsor:

Ann P. Wyckoff
with additional support from 4Culture

Flight

Music by Jonathan Dove
Libretto by April De Angelis
In English with English captions
Premiere: Sept. 24, 1998 with Glyndebourne Touring Opera in Glyndebourne
Seattle Opera premiere

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Performances: February 27, 28 and March 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, & 13, 2021

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours and 40 minutes including one intermission
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m

Cast:

Refugee David DQ Lee* (Feb. 27, Mar. 3, 7, & 13)
Randall Scotting (Feb. 28, Mar. 6, 10 & 12)

Bill Joshua Kohl
Tina Karen Vuong
Steward Mark Diamond
Minskwoman Renée Rapier
Immigration Officer Damien Geter

Conductor Viswa Subbaraman*
Director Brian Staufenbiel*
Set Designer Dave Dunning*
Costume Designer Alina Bokovikova*
Projection Designer David Murakami*
Lighting Designer Matthew Antaky*
* Company Debut

Production Sponsors:

**Tagney Jones Family Fund at Seattle Foundation
with support from the National Endowment for the Arts**

Tosca

Music by Giacomo Puccini
Libretto by Luigi Illica & Giuseppe Giacosa
Performed in Italian with English captions
Premiere: Rome, 1900
Previous Seattle Opera Performances: 1964, 1969, 1977, 1986, 1993, 2001, 2008,
2015

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performances: May 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22, & 23, 2021

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours, 40 minutes including two intermissions
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m

Cast:

Floria Tosca Saioa Hernández* (May 8, 14, 16, 19, & 22)
Karine Babajanyan* (May 9, 12, 15, & 23)

Mario Cavaradossi Marco Berti* (May 8, 14, 16, 19, & 22)
Robert Watson* (May 9, 12, 15, & 23)

Baron Scarpia Lucio Gallo* (May 8, 14, 16, 19, & 22)
Michael Chioldi* (May 9, 12, 15, & 23)

Conductor Kazem Abdullah*
Director Dan Wallace Miller

Sets & Costumes
Lighting Designer

Seattle Opera
Connie Yun

*Company Debut

Production Sponsors:

ArtsFund

Marks Family Foundation

Office of Arts & Culture | Seattle

Seattle Opera Foundation

About Seattle Opera

Established in 1963, Seattle Opera is committed to serving the people of the Pacific Northwest with performances of the highest caliber and through innovative educational and engagement programs for all. Each year, more than 95,000 people attend Seattle Opera performances, and more than 400,000 people of all ages are served through school performances, radio broadcasts, and more. By drawing our communities together, and by offering opera's unique fusion of music and drama, we create life-enhancing experiences that speak deeply to people's hearts and minds. Connect with Seattle Opera on Facebook, Twitter, SoundCloud, and on Classical King FM. 98.1.

###