Seattle Opera Announces 2015/16 Season:  
Nabucco, An American Dream, The Pearl Fishers, Mary Stuart, 
The Marriage of Figaro and The Flying Dutchman  

Company Presents First Season of Aidan Lang’s Vision  

Year-Round Opera Returns in Seattle

SEATTLE—It’s a new era at Seattle Opera. The company today announced its 2015/16 season, the first to be presented by General Director Aidan Lang, and a return to full-year programming with a total of six operas, including new productions and a world premiere. Under Lang’s leadership, the company hopes to serve the community through the magic of theater and music in McCaw Hall, and in learning and engagement programs across the Pacific Northwest.

“We are excited to offer a season that is so varied, both in terms of repertoire and presentation style,” Lang said. “In addition to a world premiere, we have in Nabucco and Mary Stuart two great, highly dramatic works that have never before been seen in Seattle. And it is especially pleasing to maintain our Wagnerian credentials with a compelling, new-to-Seattle production of The Flying Dutchman. I know our audiences are in for a thrilling ride.”

The 2015/16 season includes two company premieres: Nabucco (Verdi) and Mary Stuart (Donizetti); a world premiere: An American Dream (composed by Jack Perla with libretto by Jessica Murphy Moo) conceived from the company’s community storytelling initiative, the Belonging(s) Project; and new-to-the-company productions of The Marriage of Figaro (Mozart), The Pearl Fishers (Bizet) and The Flying Dutchman (Wagner). In addition to mainstage performances, programs that serve the community are at the heart of Lang’s vision. In the 2015/16 season, Seattle Opera launches the Flight project, a multi-
year series of programs and events that includes the commission of a trilogy of new operas for family audiences and in-school performances. *Flight* is modeled on the three-year *Our Earth* project, which to-date has served 31,893 people in more than 158 performances.

The mainstage season kicks off in August 2015 with a new production of an opera that’s never before been presented in Seattle: *Nabucco*, Verdi’s first masterpiece. The power and grandeur of the Old Testament story will come alive with innovative staging designed to bring the audience right into the action and closer to the music, notably the famous chorus “Va, pensiero.” Gordon Hawkins returns in Verdi’s first great baritone role, the King of Babylon. Mary Elizabeth Williams takes on the challenge of his fearsome daughter, Abigaille. Christian Van Horn makes his Seattle debut as Zaccaria, the High Priest. Russell Thomas returns as Ismaele, and Jamie Barton makes her Seattle Opera debut as Fenena. Italian conductor Carlo Montanaro returns following Verdi’s *Attila* (2012) and more recently, *The Consul* (2014). François Racine, who won Seattle Opera’s Artist of the Year Award for directing the acclaimed Canadian Opera Company production of *Bluebeard’s Castle* and *Erwartung* (2009), returns to direct a new production with sets by Seattle Opera’s own Robert Schaub (*The Magic Flute*, 2011); projections by Robert Bonniol, MODE Studios; and costumes by Ginette Grenier.

Running concurrently with *Nabucco* in August is the world premiere of *An American Dream*—an opera based on real stories from the Pacific Northwest. The heartbreak of World War II binds strangers together after a Japanese American family is forcibly removed from where they live on an island in Puget Sound, and the new residents slowly piece together the history of their home. Morgan Smith (Seattle Opera Young Artists Program graduate) returns to create the role of Jim, an American soldier married to Eva, a German Jew who has fled the Nazis and moved to the Pacific Northwest. Making their Seattle Opera debuts are D’Ana Lombard as Eva and, as the Japanese American family, Nina Yoshida Nelsen (Hiroko Kimura), Adam Lau (Makoto Kimura), and Hae Ji Chang (Setsuko Kimura). Conductor Judith Yan makes her Seattle Opera debut. Peter Kazaras, longtime Seattle Opera director, singer and former head of the company’s Young Artists Program, returns to direct following *The Consul*.

*An American Dream* is inspired by stories from Seattle Opera’s *Belonging(s) Project* (seattleopera.org/belongings), a community storytelling initiative where participants were asked to consider: “If you had to leave your home today and couldn’t return, what would you want to take with you? Why is that object, that memory, or that connection to your past so important?”
The simultaneous presentation of *An American Dream* with *Nabucco* is in itself a compelling artistic choice, and a deliberate pairing by the company’s general director.

“Every now and then in life, things suddenly fall neatly into place; and so it was with *An American Dream*,” Lang said. “The workshop process of *An American Dream* revealed an unexpected resonance with one of the key themes of *Nabucco*, which we had already planned. So we jumped at the opportunity to present the two works in parallel. In attending both operas, our audiences will inevitably have an even richer human experience than they would by seeing each piece in isolation.”

Next, Bizet’s hypnotic love story *The Pearl Fishers* heats up the fall. Internationally beloved designer Zandra Rhodes returns following her Artist of the Year Award costuming Seattle Opera’s *The Magic Flute* (2011) to create a grand vision of exotic splendor and vibrant color with her sets and costumes. Maureen McKay, a Seattle Opera Young Artists Program graduate who has gone on to impressive achievements in Europe, makes her mainstage debut as the beautiful priestess Leïla. John Tessier and Brett Polegato return to sing the two men who love her, Nadir and Zurga. Jonathan Lemalu makes his Seattle Opera debut as Nourabad. Both stage director Andrew Sinclair and conductor Emmanuel Joel-Hornak make their Seattle Opera debuts.

During the holiday season, Seattle Opera’s Education Department will deepen its collaborative partnership with Seattle Symphony. The Youth Opera Chorus will again perform with the symphony for its holiday concert on December 15, 2015 at Benaroya Hall. Additionally, the two companies are introducing a new pilot program: an in-school partnership between Opera Time (musical storytelling that fosters literacy for kindergarten-second grade) and Link Up: Seattle Symphony. Link Up allows third-fifth graders the opportunity to “join the orchestra” in a highly participatory program in which they learn to sing and play recorder in the classroom, and perform with the symphony from their seats.

Then, in the new year, Seattle Opera presents *The Marriage of Figaro*, Mozart’s endlessly enjoyable comedy of manners. General Director Aidan Lang returns to stage directing to mount his own production, which *The New Zealand Herald* called “engrossing, astute and unmissable.” Chinese bass-baritone Shenyang makes his Seattle Opera debut as Figaro, partnered by Nuccia Focile as Susanna. Morgan Smith returns as Count Almaviva, and Bernarda Bobro debuts as his forgiving wife. In the other cast, Aubrey Allicock as Figaro weds Talise Trevigne as Susanna. The ensemble also features Arthur Woodley, Steven Cole, Karin Mushegain, and Seattle Opera Young Artist alumni Caitlin
Lynch, Elizabeth Pojanowski, and Deborah Nansteel. Gary Thor Wedow returns following Don Giovanni (2014) to conduct.

A Seattle Opera premiere, Mary Stuart takes the stage next in February 2016. Based on Friedrich Schiller’s brilliant play, Mary Stuart dramatizes the battle of titanic wills between Queen Elizabeth I of England and her Catholic cousin Mary Stuart Queen of Scotland. In extravagant period costumes, these two iconic royals clash in a haunting story of jealousy, pity, doubt, menace, exaltation and remorse. Christine Rice and Joyce El-Khoury share the honors as Donizetti’s doomed queen, with Mary Elizabeth Williams and Keri Alkema as Queen Elizabeth I, her hated rival. Baritones Weston Hurt and Michael Todd Simpson appear as the scheming courtiers Talbot and Cecil. Carlo Montanaro is at the podium and Kevin Newbury makes his Seattle Opera debut as director.

Finally, the company concludes the season doing what it does best—Wagner! In May 2016, several of Seattle’s favorite Wagnerians return to sing The Flying Dutchman, a tale of a cursed sea captain who can be redeemed only by true love. Greer Grimsley and Alfred Walker return as the Dutchman; Alwyn Mellor and Wendy Bryn Harmer sing Senta, who will break the doomed mariner’s curse. Nikolai Schukoff and David Danholt (winner of the 2014 International Wagner Competition) sing Erik, and Daniel Sumegi returns as Daland. A new production for Seattle audiences, this compelling and stylish show from the Canadian Opera Company brings together a visionary creative team in director Christopher Alden, set/costume designer Allen Moyer, and lighting designer Anne Militello. Sebastian Lang-Lessing, who made his Seattle Opera debut during the company’s 50th Anniversary Celebration in August 2014, returns to the podium.

Inspired by the fate of the Dutchman, as well as the plight of the Israelites in Nabucco, Seattle Opera and the University of Washington College of Arts and Sciences will launch the first in an annual series of programs, performances, and events that will explore the theme of exile in the 2015/6 season. Together, with experts from a variety of disciplines in history, philosophy, literature, and the performing arts, audiences will extend and enhance their performance experience through multiple perspectives on historical and contemporary representations of exile. Programming will be offered in conjunction with performances of Wagner's work in May 2016.
Seattle Opera’s 2015/16 Season

NABUCCO
Music by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Temistocle Solera
In Italian with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performances: August 8 - 22, 2015

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours and 30 minutes
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinee at 2:00 p.m.

Premiere: Teatro alla Scala, Milan Italy on March 9, 1842
Seattle Opera premiere

Cast:
Nabucco Gordon Hawkins
Weston Hurt *
Abigaille Mary Elizabeth Williams
Raffaella Angeletti † *
Zaccaria Christian Van Horn †
Andreas Bauer † *
Fenena Jamie Barton †
Ismaele Russell Thomas
High Priest of Baal Jonathan Silvia
Abdallo Eric Neuville
Anna Karen Early Evans

Conductor Carlo Montanaro
Director François Racine
Set Design Robert Schaub and Seattle Opera technical staff
Projection Design Robert Bonniol, Mode Studios Principal Designer
Costume Design Ginette Grenier †
Lighting Design Duane Schuler
Hair & Makeup Design Joyce Degenfelder
English Captions Jonathan Dean
Sets and Costumes Seattle Opera

† Seattle Opera Debut
* On August 9, 14, & 19

Production sponsors: Seattle Opera Foundation and Krielsheimer Endowment Fund.

Mary Elizabeth Williams, Russell Thomas, and Eric Neuville are former Seattle Opera Young Artists.
Mary Elizabeth Williams and François Racine won Seattle Opera Artist of the Year Awards.
AN AMERICAN DREAM
Music by Jack Perla
Libretto by Jessica Murphy Moo
In English with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performances: August 21 and August 23, 2015

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours (including a pre-performance lecture with the orchestra and a post-performance discussion).

Evening performance begins at 7:30 p.m., matinee at 2:00 p.m.

World premiere

Cast:
Jim Morgan Smith
Eva D’Ana Lombard †
Hiroko Kimura Nina Yoshida Nelsen †
Setsuko Kimura Hae Ji Chang †
Makoto Kimura Adam Lau †

Conductor Judith Yan †
Director Peter Kazaras
Set Design Robert Schaub and Robert Bonniol, MODE Studios
Costume Design: Deborah Trout
Lighting Design: Connie Yun
Sets and Costumes Seattle Opera

† Seattle Opera Debut

Production sponsor: True Brown Foundation

Morgan Smith is a former Seattle Opera Young Artist.
THE PEARL FISHERS
Music by Georges Bizet
Libretto by Michel Carré and Eugène Cormon
In French with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performances: October 17 - 31, 2015

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours and 20 minutes
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinee at 2:00 p.m.

Premiere: September, 30, 1863 at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris
Previous Seattle Opera Productions: 1994, 2009

Cast:
Zurga Brett Polegato
Keith Phares *
Leïla Maureen McKay †
Elizabeth Zharoff †*
Nadir John Tessier
Anthony Kalil † *
Nourabad Jonathan Lemalu †
Joo Won Kang † *

Conductor Emmanuel Joel-Hornak †
Director Andrew Sinclair †
Choreographer John Malashock †
Set & Costume Design Zandra Rhodes
Lighting Design Ron Vodicka †
Hair & Makeup Design Joyce Degenfelder
English Captions Jonathan Dean
Sets and Costumes San Diego Opera

† Seattle Opera Debut
* On October 18 & 30

Production sponsor: Marks Family Foundation

Maureen McKay is a former Seattle Opera Young Artist.
Zandra Rhodes won a Seattle Opera Artist of the Year Award.
THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO  
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte  
In French with English captions  

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall  
Performances: January 16 - 30, 2016  

Approximate Running Time: 3 hours and 20 minutes  
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinee at 2:00 p.m.  

Premiere: May 1, 1786 at the Burgtheater, Vienna  

Cast:  
Figaro † Shenyang  
       Aubrey Allicock *  
Susanna Nuccia Focile  
       Talise Trevigne † *  
Countess Almaviva Bernarda Bobro †  
       Caitlin Lynch *  
Count Almaviva Morgan Smith  
       John Moore † *  
Cherubino Karin Mushegain  
       Elizabeth Pojanowski † *  
Marcellina Deborah Nansteel  
Dr. Bartolo Arthur Woodley  
Don Basilio Steven Cole  

Conductor Gary Thor Wedow  
Director Aidan Lang †  
Set Design Robin Rawstorne †  
Costume Design Elizabeth Whiting †  
Lighting Design Duane Schuler  
Hair & Makeup Design Joyce Degenfelder  
English Captions Jonathan Dean  
Sets and Costumes New Zealand Opera  

† Seattle Opera Debut  
* On January 17 & 29  

Production sponsors: Ann P. Wyckoff and Microsoft  

Caitlin Lynch, Morgan Smith, Elizabeth Pojanowski, and Deborah Nansteel are former Seattle Opera Young Artists.  
Nuccia Focile won a Seattle Opera Artist of the Year Award.
MARY STUART
Music by Gaetano Donizetti
Libretto by Giuseppe Bardari
In Italian with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performances: February 27 - 28 and March 2 - 12, 2016

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours and 30 minutes
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinee at 2:00 p.m.

Premiere: December 30, 1835 at La Scala, Milan
Seattle Opera premiere

Cast:
Maria Stuarda Christine Rice
Joyce El-Khoury † *
Elisabetta Mary Elizabeth Williams
Keri Alkema † *
Andrew Owens †
Talbot Weston Hurt
Cecil Michael Todd Simpson
Anna Renée Rapier †

Conductor Carlo Montanaro
Director Kevin Newbury †
Set Design Neil Patel †
Costume Design Jessica Jahn †
Hair & Makeup Design Joyce Degenfelder
English Captions Jonathan Dean
Sets and Costumes Minnesota Opera

† Seattle Opera Debut
* On February 28 & March 11

Production Sponsors: Maryanne Tagney and David Jones; Lenore M. Hanauer

Mary Elizabeth Williams and Michael Todd Simpson are former Seattle Opera Young Artists.
Mary Elizabeth Williams won a Seattle Opera Artist of the Year Award.
**THE FLYING DUTCHMAN**
Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner
In German with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performances: May 7 - 21, 2016

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours and 30 minutes
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinee at 2:00 p.m.

Premiere: December 30, 1835 at La Scala, Milan
Premiere: January 2, 1843 at Semperoper, Dresden

**Cast:**

Dutchman: Greer Grimsley
   Alfred Walker *
Senta: Alwyn Mellor
   Wendy Bryn Harmer *
Erik: Nikolai Schukoff
   David Danholt †*
Daland: Daniel Sumegi
Steersman: Colin Ainsworth †
Mary: Luretta Bybee

Conductor: Sebastian Lang-Lessing
Director: Christopher Alden
Set & Costume Design: Allen Moyer
Lighting Design: Anne Militello †
Hair & Makeup Design: Joyce Degenfelder
English Captions: Jonathan Dean
Sets and Costumes: Canadian Opera Company

† Seattle Opera Debut
* On May 8 & 20

**Production sponsors: ArtsFund and Office of Arts & Culture | Seattle**

*Greer Grimsley won a Seattle Opera Artist of the Year Award.*
*David Danholt won Seattle Opera’s International Wagner Competition in 2014.*

**Seattle Opera Ticket Information**

**Subscriptions on Sale Now**
Five-Opera Renewal and New Subscription Ticket Prices: $225 to 3,915*
Seattle Opera Ticket Office: 206.389.7676 or 800.426.1619
Online Orders: www.seattleopera.org
All performances take place at Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, 321 Mercer Street
Evening performances begin at 7:30 pm, with matinees at 2:00 pm
*Prices include a $3-per-ticket facility fee and (in some locations) a preferred seating donation.
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About Seattle Opera
Seattle Opera is a leading opera company, recognized both in the United States and around the world. The company is committed to advancing the cultural life in the Pacific Northwest with performances of the highest caliber, and through innovative education and community programs that take opera far beyond the McCaw Hall stage. Each year, more than 95,000 people attend Seattle Opera performances and the company’s programs serve more than 65,000 people of all ages. Seattle Opera is especially known for its acclaimed works in the Richard Wagner canon, and has created an “international attraction” in its presentation of Wagner’s epic Ring, according to The New York Times.