



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 23, 2020**

Contact: Gabrielle Kazuko Nomura Gainor (206) 295-0998, [gabrielle.gainor@seattleopera.org](mailto:gabrielle.gainor@seattleopera.org)

Press images: <https://seattleopera.smugmug.com/Events/MEW/>

Password: "press"

## **Soprano Mary Elizabeth Williams dazzles audiences from stage to computer screen**

### **Seattle Opera announces upcoming KING FM broadcasts and online recitals**

SEATTLE—Seattle Opera is announcing the final singers to perform in its online recital series, **Songs of Summer**. Artists include beloved soprano [Mary Elizabeth Williams](#)—star of *Tosca*, *Nabucco*, and *Mary Stuart*. The “vocal phenomenon and immense actress” (*classiquenews.com*) performed at McCaw Hall most recently as Serena in *Porgy and Bess* ('18), when she sang the show-stopping rendition of “My Man’s Gone Now.” For Williams’ portrayal of Elizabeth I in *Mary Stuart*, *The Seattle Times* wrote: “Feisty and mighty, Williams’ soprano was equally impressive when she lightened it in moments of highly effective refinement. She knows how to command the stage and how to establish the power of her personality through gesture and movement, as well as with her voice.”

Scheduled to stream on Seattle Opera’s Facebook, YouTube, and website on August 27, Williams’ program includes three new-to-her arias that she’s always dreamed of debuting.

“Despite the fear and uncertainty of this moment, creating this recital has helped me focus and remember why I dedicated my life to music,” Williams said. “What better time is there than this very moment to look forward to the future? To be brave and reinvent myself as an artist? Share this journey with me—digitally for now, and hopefully in person in the very near future.”

Additional Songs of Summer artists include **Theo Hoffman**, a sought-after baritone who’s recently sung with LA Opera and Opera Philadelphia; **Vanessa Vasquez**, Winner of the 2017 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions who was set to make her company debut as Mimì in *La bohème*; and **Will Liverman**, Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* (’17) who last season made history as the first Black Papageno at the Metropolitan Opera. **Damien Geter**, who impressed audiences as the Colonel in *The Falling and the Rising* (’19) and composed “An African American Requiem,” will also give a recital for Songs of Summer, as well as internationally renowned **Ben Bliss** (Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw*, ’18), recipient of the Martin E. Segal award from the Metropolitan Opera. Upcoming Songs of Summer pianists include **Brad Moore, David McDade, Jonathan King** and **Jessica Hall**.

Through this shift to digital and radio platforms, Seattle Opera has continued to employ artists—more than 50—including singers and pianists for online recitals, and teaching artists for educational programming such as the Teen Vocal Studio.

“Seattle Opera has experienced devastating losses during COVID-19, and yet we are here—creating art and employing artists. These singers have all had their livelihoods impacted from lost jobs and cancelled performances, and they bring an unstoppable desire to perform for you, their audiences,” said **General Director Christina Scheppelmann**.

Seattle Opera’s online and radio programming has been far-reaching: More than 12,000 viewers have tuned in to watch a recital, and more than 100,000 listeners have tuned in to Classical KING FM (either on the radio or online) to listen to broadcasts of previous Seattle Opera performances.

In addition to the online recital, Mary Elizabeth Williams can also be heard on the radio during **Seattle Opera Mornings on KING FM**, which will continue into

August and beyond. Williams can be heard during the August 1 broadcast of *Nabucco*.

To watch Songs of Summer online recitals, go to Seattle Opera's Facebook, YouTube, or [seattleopera.org](http://seattleopera.org). Each recital is available for two weeks following its premiere date. To listen to Seattle Opera Mornings on KING FM, tune in to 98.1 or go to [king.org](http://king.org) every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. A full schedule is available at [seattleopera.org/kingfm](http://seattleopera.org/kingfm).

### **Online Recitals & Radio Broadcasts:**

Thursday, July 23 at 7:00 PM: Theo Hoffman and pianist Brad Moore

Saturday, July 25 at 10:00 AM: *Rigoletto* on KING FM

Thursday, July 30 at 7:00 PM: Vanessa Vasquez and pianist David McDade

Saturday, August 1 at 10:00 AM: *Nabucco* on KING FM

Thursday, August 6 at 7:00 PM: Will Liverman and pianist Jonathan King

Saturday, August 8 at 10:00 AM: *The Tales of Hoffmann* on KING FM

Thursday, August 13 at 7:00 PM: Damien Geter and pianist Jessica Hall

Saturday, August 15 at 10:00 AM: *Lohengrin* on KING FM

Thursday, August 20 at 7:00 PM: Ben Bliss

Saturday, August 22 at 10:00 AM: *The Barber of Seville* on KING FM

Thursday, August 27 at 7:00 PM: Mary Elizabeth Williams

### **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 98.1 Classical KING FM.