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## Seattle Opera presents online discussion 'Crescendo for Racial Justice in Opera'

**Noon-1:30 p.m.  
August 19, 2020  
Online webinar via Zoom**

SEATTLE—The global pandemic has created a setback for arts groups across the Pacific Northwest. But despite challenges, Seattle Opera is using this moment as an opportunity to create equity in their art form through its next Community Conversation: **Crescendo for Racial Justice in Opera**. Black, Asian, and Latinx opera professionals will come together to reflect on this moment in time, and envision a future for this 400-year-old art form which—while beloved all over the world—often contains dated and racist stereotypes. Can great works of the operatic canon like *Madame Butterfly*, *Tosca*, and *Aida* be vessels of liberation and representation for People of Color? How should opera change in the wake of COVID-19 shutdowns and the Black Lives Matter protests? Speakers will explore these question and more on August 19.

Opera, classical music, theater, and dance reflect cultures long-permeated by deep-seated inequities for Black people and other People of Color. The recent murders of George Floyd and others have laid bare the urgent need for systemic change in all

aspects of society, with the arts being no exception. It's a reckoning that comes at a time when opera houses are shuttered across the country.

"Right now is a chance to pause and reflect on opera, and on our industry," said **Alejandra Valarino Boyer, Director of Programs and Partnerships**, who will moderate the discussion. "Our conversation will explore the possibilities of opera as a space of belonging, healing, and liberation for communities of color; speakers will lay the foundation for a future we believe in."

Joining Valarino Boyer on the panel is **Maestro Kazem Abdullah**, scheduled to make his Seattle Opera debut in May 2021 with *Tosca*; **Matthew Ozawa**, opera stage director who previously spoke on Seattle Opera's *Madame Butterfly* panel; and **Naomi André**, professor at the University of Michigan, Seattle Opera Scholar in Residence, and author of *Black Opera: History, Power, Engagement*.

Registration is not required for this event. To join the Zoom webinar and for more information, go to [seattleopera.org/crescendo](https://seattleopera.org/crescendo).

### **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.