



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 9, 2018**

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Press images: <https://seattleopera.smugmug.com/1819/Turn/>

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## **Sit down for *The Turn of the Screw*—if you dare!**

**With a 13-year-old lead, Seattle Opera's eerie show weaves a tale of ambiguity, loss of innocence**

**Oct. 13-27, 2018  
McCaw Hall**

SEATTLE—As Halloween approaches, the movies aren't the only place for a thrill in a darkened theater. This October, a ghost story will come alive through live music at Seattle Opera's [\*The Turn of the Screw\*](#) directed by **Peter Kazaras** and conducted by **Maestro Constatin Trinks**. Set in an old mansion in the countryside, Britten's opera depicts a tale of haunted children that fans of *Stranger Things*, *The Shining*, and *The Sixth Sense* would love.

An unnamed Governess moves to an English country house to take care of two siblings, Miles and Flora, only to experience supernatural goings-on, and ominous whispers about the past. As she gets to know her young charges the Governess becomes increasingly convinced they are suffering some form of demonic possession. Britten dials up audiences' adrenaline by leaving no easy answers: Are Peter Quint and Miss Jessel actual ghosts, returned from the dead, or are they products of the Governess's hysteria? Are the children demonically possessed, neglected victims of abuse, or just normal

mischievous kids? Britten was fascinated by the mysteries of human behavior. What makes people act as they do? What hidden forces compel their choices? His operas (*The Rape of Lucretia*, *Billy Budd*, and *Peter Grimes* to name a few) were filled with moral ambiguities and loss of innocence, and *The Turn of the Screw* is a perfect example.

Alternating in the role of Miles are two 13-year-old boy-sopranos making Seattle Opera debuts: **Rafi Bellamy Plaice** of England, who was named the BBC Radio 2 Chorister of 2017, and **Forrest Wu** of Seattle who sings with the Northwest Boychoir. Inspired by the ethereal qualities of the adolescent voice, Britten's operas often gave children opportunities to sing just as much as their adult co-stars.

"This piece offers a chance to see incredible young singers holding their own with adult professionals—not something you see every day in opera," said **Aren Der Hacopian**, Seattle Opera's Director of Artistic Administration and Planning, who helped cast the show. "When a storyteller adds a plot twist to create tension, this can be referred to as a 'turn of the screw.' These accomplished young artists play a big role in creating that scary and suspenseful experience."

The cast also includes four singers returning to McCaw Hall. Cuban American soprano **Elizabeth Caballero**, who most recently sang here as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (2014), returns as the Governess. Frequent performer on The Metropolitan Opera stage **Maria Zifchak**, Ragonde in Seattle Opera's *Count Ory* (2015), returns as the housekeeper Mrs. Grose. Starring as the two ghosts-in-residence, Peter Quint and Miss Jessel are **Ben Bliss** and **Marcy Stonikas** respectively. British/Iranian soprano **Soraya Mafi** makes her Seattle Opera debut as Miles' sister, Flora.

*The Turn of the Screw* opens Saturday, Oct. 13 and runs through Saturday, Oct. 27. Tickets are available online at [seattleopera.org](http://seattleopera.org), by calling

206.389.7676, or in person at the box office located at 1020 John Street (two blocks west of Fairview). Box office hours are Monday-Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Groups save at least 20 percent: 206.676.5588 or [groups@seattleopera.org](mailto:groups@seattleopera.org).

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## ***The Turn of the Screw***

Music by Benjamin Britten  
Libretto by Myfanwy Piper  
In English with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall  
Performances: October 13, 14, 17, 20, 24, 26, and 27, 2018

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours and 15 minutes including one intermission  
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinee at 2:00 p.m.  
Premiere: Teatro la Fenice, Venice; September 14, 1954

### **Cast:**

Governess	Elizabeth Caballero
Peter Quint	Ben Bliss
Mrs. Grose	Maria Zifchak
Miss Jessel	Marcy Stonikas
Flora	Soraya Mafi*
Miles	Rafi Bellamy Plaice* (Oct. 13, 17, 24, & 27) Forrest Wu* (Oct. 14, 20, & 26)

Conductor	Constantin Trinks*
Director	Peter Kazaras
Set Designer	Robert Dahlstrom
Projection Designer	Adam Larsen
Costume Designer	Deborah Trout
Lighting Designer	Connie Yun

\* Company Debut

**Production Sponsor: Marks Family Foundation**

**Performance Sponsor:**  
**October 13**  
**In Memory of Mary Lou Everett**

**Artist Sponsor:**  
**Stephen Sprenger**  
**Rafi Bellamy Plaice**