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, by calling
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