

SEATTLE OPERA.

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Seattle Opera Announces 2022/23 Season

Five productions explore themes of love, sacrifice, power, and betrayal:

The Elixir of Love

Tristan and Isolde

Samson and Delilah (in concert)

A Thousand Splendid Suns (world premiere)

La traviata

**Award-winning Afghan film director Roya Sadat
debuts with world premiere of *A Thousand Splendid Suns***

**Argentinian production of *Tristan and Isolde*
brings international perspective, renowned artists to Seattle**

***Samson and Delilah* appears at Seattle Opera for the first time since 1965
in concert presentation featuring Tacoma native J’Nai Bridges**

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seattleopera.org**

SEATTLE—General Director **Christina Schepplermann** announced today the lineup of repertoire and artists for Seattle Opera’s 2022/23 season, which will bring a poignant world premiere (***A Thousand Splendid Suns***), a concert performance of an alluring French powerhouse (***Samson and Delilah***), and stagings of three cherished favorites (***The Elixir of Love***, ***Tristan and Isolde***, and ***La traviata***) to the Seattle Opera stage. Performing these works will be over 50 mainstage soloists, including a dozen Seattle Opera debuts.

"Next season is a reminder of all that live opera can be," says General Director Christina Scheppelmann. "After an extended period of restrictions, we are thrilled to offer an expansive vision of the operatic universe that encompasses a remarkable breadth of stories and operatic styles. Music is a window to the world, and we cannot wait to show that in full force once again."

Headlining the season is the **world premiere** of ***A Thousand Splendid Suns*** (February 25–March 11, 2023 at McCaw Hall), an adaptation of **Khaled Hosseini's** best-selling novel. With music by American composer **Sheila Silver** and a libretto by **Stephen Kitsakos**, this breathtaking work tells the story of two Afghan women, brought together under Taliban rule, who must make unthinkable sacrifices as they fight for their survival. Directing the production is Afghan filmmaker **Roya Sadat**, whose trailblazing work as one of Afghanistan's first female film directors has garnered more than 20 international film awards, including the 2021 Kim Dae-jung Nobel Peace Film Award and the 2018 International Women of Courage Award presented by the United States Department of State.

"*A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a miraculous narrative spanning several generations," says **Sadat**. "It tells a universal story of self-sacrifice, fear, love, and hope that connects every human being from each corner of the world. Unfortunately, this opera has even more meaning today, in the aftermath of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, as this horrible history is being repeated once again for the women and girls of our land."

For the opera's conductor, **Viswa Subbaraman**, the opera has a personal resonance: "I was lucky to be able to work with musicians from the Afghanistan National Institute of Music. It was a scary time after the American withdrawal. I kept refreshing the news to see whether they had been airlifted out. Watching the Taliban burning musical instruments and beating artists really makes us realize how important the arts are. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is incredibly relevant to who we are as humans—it shows us the reality of life in Afghanistan through a lens that we don't get to see on a normal basis. And that brings them closer to us."

"When I first read *A Thousand Splendid Suns* I fell in love with Mariam and Laila," says composer **Sheila Silver**. "Their courage, the sacrifices they make for one another, their resilience in a world dominated by civil war and male oppression—I yearned to tell their story. And when, in preparation for composing this opera, I began to study Hindustani music—part of Afghan musical culture—I had no idea how profoundly it would inspire my musical language and vision."

A Thousand Splendid Suns will welcome back mezzo-soprano **Karin Mushegain** (Mariam), soprano **Maureen McKay** (Laila), and baritone **John Moore** (Rasheed), with tenor **Rafael Moras** (Tariq) making his Seattle Opera debut.

Seattle Opera will kick off its 2022/23 season with Gaetano Donizetti's delightfully seductive comedy ***The Elixir of Love*** (August 6–20, 2022 at McCaw Hall). Following an innovative film adaptation of the opera in 2020, Seattle Opera is excited to bring this bubbly production from Santa Fe Opera to the McCaw Hall stage. Conductor **Giampaolo Bisanti**, recently appointed Music Director of the Opéra Royal de Wallonie-Liège, will join stage director **Stephen Lawless** at the helm of an intoxicating cast of new faces and Seattle favorites. Georgian soprano **Salome Jicia**, praised for her "razor-sharp coloratura" by *Musical America*, makes her Seattle Opera debut as Adina alongside Samoan tenor **Amitai Pati**, whose "light, lyrical" voice (*San Francisco Classical Voice*) debuts as Nemorino. Italian bass-baritone **Luca Pisaroni** will fill the role of Dulcamara, bringing his "robust tone and informed style" (*The New York Times*) to Seattle Opera for the first time.

Continuing its longstanding tradition of imaginative Wagner productions, Seattle Opera next presents the revolutionary ***Tristan and Isolde*** (October 15–29, 2022 at McCaw Hall). This production, led by Argentinian stage director **Marcelo Lombardero** and the electrifying conductor **Jordan de Souza**, draws on the wealth of imaginative opera stagings being mounted throughout South America.

General Director **Christina Scheppelmann** hopes this production will bring more attention to South America's rich operatic history. "Opera is an international art form," says Scheppelmann. "It is crucial that we continue working with creators from abroad to maintain opera's vibrancy. Argentina has a strong operatic tradition and many fine opera houses, and we are excited to have the opportunity to work with the creative team from the Teatro Argentino de la Plata. I hope their perspective will help audiences in Seattle hear this music with fresh ears."

Singing the lead roles are "vocal phenomenon" (classiquenews.com) **Mary Elizabeth Williams**, who returns to McCaw Hall as Isolde; celebrated Heldentenor **Stefan Vinke**, "whose voice is unequalled" (Bachtrack) in the role of Tristan; and the "spectacular" (*The New York Times*) **Amber Wagner** in her Seattle Opera debut as Brangäne.

The season proceeds with a landmark concert presentation of a work that has not appeared on the Seattle Opera stage since 1965: Camille Saint-Saëns's ***Samson and Delilah*** (January 20 & 22, 2023 at McCaw Hall). This concert performance, led by Seattle Symphony conductor emeritus **Ludovic Morlot**, will feature Tacoma native **J'Nai Bridges** in her Seattle Opera debut as Delilah. "I have made many

incredible debuts in my career thus far, but making my Seattle Opera debut brings me an unmatched sense of pride and accomplishment,” says Bridges.

“Seattle/Tacoma/Lakewood have poured so much love and support into me and I am beyond excited to share my artistry with my first supporters, my home.”

Joining Bridges are internationally celebrated tenor **Yonghoon Lee** making his Seattle Opera debut as Samson, along with audience favorite **Greer Grimsley** as the High Priest of Dagon. Famous for its exhilarating bacchanale and Delilah’s sensual aria “Mon coeur s’ouvre à ta voix,” this biblical tale of power, seduction, and vengeance is a sonic spectacle that is not to be missed.

Seattle Opera will close its season with perennial favorite **La traviata** (May 6–19, 2022 at McCaw Hall), Giuseppe Verdi’s tragic tale of a Parisian socialite who combats entrenched social convention to find enduring love, before succumbing to a deadly disease. This glamorous co-production with Washington National Opera stages the grandeur and elegance of nineteenth-century Parisian high society with stage direction by **Francesca Zambello** and costumes by Tony Award®-winning Costume Designer **Jess Goldstein**. Conductor **Carlo Montanaro** returns to Seattle Opera to continue his run of celebrated Verdi productions at McCaw Hall, including *Il trovatore* (‘19), *Rigoletto* (‘19), and *Nabucco* (‘15).

Four internationally heralded singers will make their Seattle Opera debuts in the opera’s lead roles: Armenian soprano **Mané Galoyan**, praised for her “emotionally intense and touchingly fragile” portrayals (*Bachtrack*), and South African soprano **Vuvu Mpofo**, called “one in a million” by OperaWire, appear as Violetta, while tenors **Rame Lahaj** (“hardly to be outdone,” *Los Angeles Times*) and **Duke Kim** (2021 grand finals winner, Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions) fill the role of Alfredo.

For a **complete list of artists and events** for the 2022/23 season, visit <https://www.seattleopera.org/subscribe/>.

Public safety will continue to be Seattle Opera’s top priority throughout the 2022/23 season. Safety protocols will follow or exceed public-health guidelines in place at the time of performance and will likely include proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test, masking requirements, and more. For more information, see [seattleopera.org/safety](https://www.seattleopera.org/safety).

About Seattle Opera

Established in 1963, Seattle Opera is committed to serving the people of the Pacific Northwest through music, storytelling, and programs for people of all ages. Each year, more than 80,000 people attend the company's performances, and more than

100,000 people are served through school performances, radio broadcasts, and more. The organization brings opera to life in a number of different ways, offering artistic excellence through national and international collaborations. Seattle Opera strives to create an environment where artists, staff, behind-the-scenes workers, and members of the community feel a strong connection to the company, and to the art of opera. Follow Seattle Opera on Facebook, Twitter, SoundCloud, and on 98.1 Classical KING FM.

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