

SEATTLE OPERA.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 10, 2023

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Seattle Opera announces 60th anniversary season

Six performances showcase opera's full range:

Das Rheingold

Alcina

Holiday Chorus Concert

X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X

The Barber of Seville

60th Anniversary Concert & Gala

Das Rheingold returns to Seattle
with striking new concept by director Brian Staufenbiel

Soprano turned maestro Christine Brandes takes the podium
for George Frideric Handel's gripping *Alcina*

Seattle premiere of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*
brings overdue attention to composer Anthony Davis

60th Anniversary Concert & Gala closes landmark season with a bang

Season subscriptions on sale now, beginning at \$224
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seattleopera.org

SEATTLE, WA—General Director **Christina Scheppelmann** announced today the lineup of artists and repertoire for Seattle Opera's **2023/24 season**, which celebrates the company's **60th anniversary**. To mark the occasion, Seattle Opera offers a range of titles spanning nearly all of opera's history, from the eighteenth century to the 1980s. From intimate character portrayals to fantasy epics, the season features works never before seen in Seattle (***Alcina, X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X***) alongside enduring favorites (***Das Rheingold, The Barber of Seville***). A roster of some of opera's most celebrated creators, including more than 20 company debuts, will bring these stories to life.

"I am thrilled to be able to celebrate 60 years of Seattle Opera with this first-rate lineup of artists and titles," said Christina Scheppelmann. "60 years is a significant milestone for any American opera company, and it's a testament to the strong tradition of opera and the performing arts in this city. This season will be both a reminder of that history and a promise of many more years to come."

In homage to Seattle Opera's long Wagner tradition, the season opens with director **Brian Staufenbiel's** eye-catching new production of ***Das Rheingold*** (August 12–20, 2023, at McCaw Hall). Headlining the cast are Seattle favorite **Greer Grimsley**, "a formidable Wotan" (*Washington Post*) reprising his role from 2013's *Ring* cycle, and **Denyce Graves**, "one of the great mezzos of the 20th century" (*OperaWire*) in her Seattle Opera debut as Erda.

"It is always an honor to be asked to reprise a role, but the chance to sing Wotan again in Seattle is particularly special to me because it's where I sang my first *Ring*," said Grimsley, who first appeared as Wotan at Seattle Opera in 2005. "Seattle has been my musical home for many years and I have great affection for this city. I'm very grateful to return once again."

Seattle Symphony Conductor Emeritus **Ludovic Morlot** will conduct the mostly American cast, which includes **Michael Mayes** as Alberich, **Melody Wilson** as Fricka, **Frederick Ballentine** as Loge, **Kenneth Kellogg** as Fafner, and **Peixin Chen** in his company debut as Fasolt.

The season continues with George Frideric Handel's magical ***Alcina*** (October 14–28, 2023, at McCaw Hall), which appears for the first time on the Seattle Opera stage. Based on Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem *Orlando furioso*, *Alcina* tells the tale of a powerful sorceress who lures men to her enchanted island. Internationally renowned stage director **Tim Albery** makes his Seattle Opera debut leading a cast that includes returning favorites **Vanessa Goikoetxea** as Alcina, **Randall Scotting** as Ruggiero, **Sharleen Joynt** as Morgana, and **Ginger Costa-Jackson** as Bradamante.

Taking the podium is **Christine Brandes**, the distinguished soprano known for her vibrant interpretations of Baroque and Classical roles. "For me, *Alcina* is one of Handel's very best operas," said Brandes, who debuted at Seattle Opera as Cleopatra in *Julius Caesar in Egypt* ('07). "The characters are so complex and the music is utterly vivid and compelling; it's impossible for audiences not to identify with this story. Note for note, scene for scene, it's a truly magical opera."

For the holiday season, Seattle Opera presents a new **Holiday Chorus Concert** (December 8–10, 2023, at Tagney Jones Hall) featuring the excellent Seattle Opera Chorus. This program of seasonal tunes and hidden gems from the opera repertoire will showcase the chorus's broad stylistic range.

"Opera is so much more than just fancy clothes and long nights," said chorus master **Michaella Calzaretta**, who enters her second season with the company. "The opera chorus is a versatile ensemble that transcends the boundaries of the opera house. Audiences should expect a holiday concert unlike anything else they will see in Seattle."

Continuing its commitment to new American opera, Seattle Opera next presents **X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X** (February 24–March 9, 2024, at McCaw Hall). Presented in co-production with Detroit Opera, Opera Omaha, the Metropolitan Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, *X* is a long-overdue revival of composer **Anthony Davis's** "pathbreaking" work (*The New York Times*) that has transfixed operagoers across the country. Director **Robert O'Hara's** production tells the story of the orator and civil rights icon through an Afrofuturist lens that envisions a bright future for oppressed peoples.

For composer **Anthony Davis**, reviving his work in the 2020s has given it striking new relevance. "In 1984, [librettist] **Thulani Davis** wrote the line, 'You had your foot on me, always pressing,' for Malcolm's concluding Act I aria," said Davis. "This phrase speaks to the uncanny relevance of *X* in our post-George Floyd reckoning. For African Americans, Malcolm X was and is today a heroic figure who set the stage for the Black Lives Matter movement, a prophet whose vision inspired generations in the political struggle. The opera tells his story in music that captures the time and the place and the momentum of a movement."

Kenneth Kellogg will step into the role of Malcolm X for the first time. "To take on the role of Malcolm X is an absolute honor," said Kellogg, who last appeared at Seattle Opera as The Father in *Blue* ('21). "If any man deserves to be immortalized by the grandeur of opera, it's him. The journey of his life is as epic as any story. For

many he was a prince, for others he was a villain. For me, he is a man who had the wisdom to see and the courage to say and do something about it."

Joining Kellogg are **Joshua Stewart** as Street/Elijah Muhammad and **Leah Hawkins** in her Seattle Opera debut as Louise Little/Betty Shabazz. Sought-after conductor **Kazem Abdullah**, praised for his "nimbleness" and "expert guidance" (*Los Angeles Times*), returns to Seattle after his debut in 2021's filmed *Tosca*.

Rounding out the season is one of opera's most beloved and enduring comedies, Gioachino Rossini's ***The Barber of Seville*** (May 4–18, 2024, at McCaw Hall). Director **Lindy Hume** brings her "bright hilarious production" (*The Stranger*) back to Seattle alongside "rising star" (*BBC Music Magazine*) **Valentina Peleggi** at the helm in her Seattle Opera debut.

Finally, Seattle Opera punctuates its landmark season with a celebratory **60th Anniversary Concert & Gala** (May 11, 2024, at McCaw Hall). Featuring performances by the Seattle Opera Chorus, Seattle Symphony, and an exciting cast of international soloists, this one-of-a-kind event will celebrate the legacy of opera in Seattle and look forward to many decades to come. Tickets go on sale later in 2023.

On the whole, the 23/24 season promises operagoers a lineup of stellar performers and gripping stories that are sure to surprise and delight. "I think our audiences are in for a treat," said Christina Scheppelmann. "Simply let it seduce you—it might even change the way you think about opera."

Performance information

Das Rheingold

- Music and libretto by Richard Wagner
- August 12, 16, 18, & 20, 2023
- McCaw Hall (321 Mercer St, Seattle, WA 98109)
- seattleopera.org/rheingold

Alcina

- Music by George Frideric Handel, libretto by an unidentified poet
- October 14, 15, 20, 22, 25, & 28, 2023
- McCaw Hall (321 Mercer St, Seattle, WA 98109)
- seattleopera.org/alcina

Holiday Chorus Concert

- December 8, 9, & 10, 2023
- Tagney Jones Hall at the Opera Center (363 Mercer St, Seattle, WA 98109)

X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X

- Music by Anthony Davis, libretto by Thulani Davis, story by Christopher Davis
- February 24 & 25, March 1, 3, 6, & 9, 2024
- McCaw Hall (321 Mercer St, Seattle, WA 98109)
- seattleopera.org/x

The Barber of Seville

- Music by Gioachino Rossini, libretto by Cesare Sterbini
- May 4, 5, 10, 12, 15, & 18, 2024
- McCaw Hall (321 Mercer St, Seattle, WA 98109)
- seattleopera.org/barber

60th Anniversary Concert & Gala

- May 11, 2024
- McCaw Hall (321 Mercer St, Seattle, WA 98109)

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 Classical KING FM 98.1.

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