

# SEATTLE OPERA. THANKFUL



**FALL 2021**

Donor Impact Report

# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

# OVATIONS FOR LA BOHÈME



Thanks to you, our recent production of *La bohème* and safe return to live in-person performances in McCaw Hall was an outstanding success. Members of the Seattle Opera family—both new and returning—embraced medical science, were vaccinated, and donned their masks to relish in Giacomo Puccini's luscious music. From the singers and musicians to the backstage crew and staff members, we are grateful for your enthusiasm for Seattle Opera. And now that the season of appreciation is here, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your unwavering support.

Wishing you all the joys of the season,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Christina Scheppelmann'.

Christina Scheppelmann,  
General Director

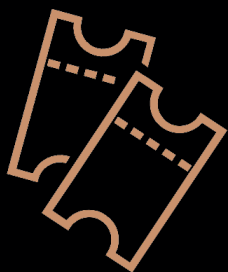
The production was  
**SPECTACULAR!**  
I've seen *La bohème* several times. But this time I cried. Amazing production! And, yes, my Grandson loved it, too!

—DIANE F. VIA FACEBOOK

It was like coming home again. So good to be back [in McCaw Hall].

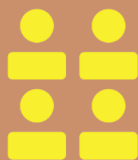
—KRISTA E. VIA FACEBOOK

# LA BOHÈME BY THE NUMBERS



**13,500**

TICKETS SOLD TO OUR  
FIRST PERFORMANCE IN  
MCCAW HALL IN MORE  
THAN 19 MONTHS



FIRST OPERA  
EXPERIENCE FOR  
MORE THAN

**50%+**

OF SINGLE TICKET BUYERS



COMMUNITY PARTNERS  
PLYMOUTH HOUSING,  
JEWISH FAMILY  
SERVICES, AND  
PATH WITH ART ALSO  
RECEIVED FREE TICKETS  
FOR THEIR CLIENTS



FOR THEIR DEDICATION  
TO OUR COMMUNITY,

**350**

HEALTH CARE  
PROFESSIONALS  
RECEIVED FREE TICKETS



**98%**

OF AUDIENCES REPORTED  
FEELING SAFE OR VERY  
SAFE AT MCCAW HALL

“Thank you for reaching out to us and providing 30 free tickets to our clients. This is an incredible opportunity. I can imagine that for some of our clients this will be the most exciting outing they have had since the pandemic began, and for others it might be the most exciting event they’ve attended in many years. I cannot thank you enough for this wonderful partnership and your support for the community, particularly during a time that I know has been so hard for all of your staff and artists.”

—ADAM HALPERN, JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE

# INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Through the Seattle Arts Fellowship program, we are making an investment in training young professionals who identify as Black, Indigenous or a Person of Color for careers in arts administration. Last summer, the first cohort of fellows began work in Marketing and Communications, Community Education, and Artistic Planning. The fellows are also receiving leadership training and networking opportunities with many of the region's top arts professionals. The Seattle Arts Fellowship program is a collaborative initiative of Seattle Opera, Seattle Symphony, Pacific Northwest Ballet, KING FM and Seattle University.

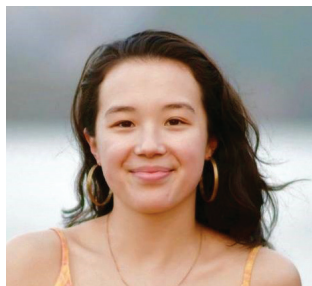


**DALANIE HARRIS**

**Marketing and Communications Fellow  
Seattle Symphony**

*"It didn't take long to get working. I was given assignments right from the start. I write radio ads, program notes, press releases, and other material. Writing program notes is especially difficult because they are for a broad audience. So—at the same time—they must be accessible to audience members who have little musical experience, but detailed*

*enough that patrons with extensive musical knowledge will so engage. It is a hard balance to strike. It helps that I get feedback and edits from my colleagues."*



**KIERRA NGUYEN**

**Artistic Planning Fellow  
Seattle Opera**

*"I started with a lot of listening, shadowing, and going to planning meetings and interviews. Then my role increased and I got more responsibility, contacting agents and helping with contracts for next season. I support the artists. I coordinate their access cards to the building and parking deck and make sure they have all that they need during their*

*time in Seattle. I've read all the American Guild for Music Artists contracts to make sure that we're meeting our contractual obligations. In such a short time, my confidence has grown. As a performer myself, I don't think I will ever perform again without keeping in mind the details and challenges of staging a performance."*



**GABRIELA PAEZ SHUTT**

**Community  
Engagement Fellow  
Pacific Northwest Ballet**

*"My big project is planning and implementing our first Sensory Friendly performance of the Nutcracker. I've been working with Sensory Access, a local organization that helps provide sensory accessibility and friendly performances. Sensory Friendly is an effort to break down barriers that*

*make attendance easier for people with special needs such as autism. The houselights remain on and patrons can talk. They may enter and exit the performance and use cell phones. We'll also have a quiet room and fidget toys for people who experience sensory overload or have ADHD. I'm excited that the ballet can present this type of performance to Seattle."*



# CREATION LAB: A NEW WORKS INCUBATOR

By Glenn Hare



A recording session of *Flush*, a new 20-minute opera developed by Paul Stovall and Julia Koyfman during the Jane Lang Davis Creation Lab.

*Flush* is a new dark dramedy about a young woman's struggles with bulimia by Washington State composer Paul Stovall and librettist Julia Koyfman. The 20-minute opera is one of eight new works developed last summer through Seattle Opera's Jane Lang Davis Creation Lab. The idea for *Flush* was inspired Koyfman's own experiences struggling with eating disorders. "I suffered self-hatred and isolation," Koyfman said. Designed to cultivate a new generation of local opera creators, the lab's first cohort comprised 16 musicians and writers from various backgrounds, experiences, and interests.

"When I submitted my application for this amazing opportunity, I genuinely thought that it would be a long shot to get accepted," said another composer Drew Swatosh. "I was pleasantly surprised when I received the email last fall letting me know I was accepted. This has been an incredible experience." Swatosh's opera, *If Only I Could Give You the Sun*, is a transgender/non-binary re-telling of the ancient Greek tale of Icarus and Daedalus they created with librettist Brian Dang.

In addition to table readings and music workshops, the Creation Lab process connected participants with veteran composers, directors, and other creators. Librettists Jerre Dye and Tazewell Thompson, actor Aishè Keita, and composers Zach Redler and Kamala Sankaram were mentors and coaches.

"The artists were incredibly talented and eager to explore and create their versions of opera," said Redler. "They all brought very different strengths and experiences with them, which led to a wide variety of sonic language and storytelling techniques."



Creation Lab team librettist Brian Dang and composer Drew Swatosh.

Creation Lab artists also created stories from varying points of view. “We’ve always known we wanted to create work portraying LGBTQ+ characters to reflect our community on stage, not just as performers, but as leading characters,” said Larisa Juno, the librettist of *Magi*. A hero’s journey, *Magi* involves leaving a small town, train travel, a sly circus ringmaster, and overcoming self-doubt.

Musically, *Magi* fuses hip-hop and electronic music within classic operatic structures to emphasize the versatility of the genre. “The mentors helped us encapsulate our big picture ideas into a 20-minute program,” said Rico Lastrapes, the opera’s composer.

The creation of new work is one outcome of Creation Lab. Another is the professional development of the artists. “The program is just as much about professional and artistic growth as it is about exploring new sounds and stories,” said Alejandra Valarino Boyer, Director of Programs and Partnerships.

You can view the eight new works created by the 2021 class of Creation Lab artists at [seattleopera.org/creationlab](https://seattleopera.org/creationlab).



Creation Lab team composer Rico Lastrapes and librettist Larisa Juno.

# MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS



*Our collaboration with the leadership and staff at The Museum of Flight made the film production of Flight possible.*

Building meaningful partnerships throughout our community is a hallmark of Seattle Opera. We strive to develop relationships that benefit our partners and the people they serve. When we collaborate, Seattle Opera expands the joy and reach of the art form. We work hand in hand with senior living centers and social service agencies, as well as schools and other community organizations. In recent years, we have joined these and other partners to create meaningful and lasting experiences.

**BLOODWORKS NORTHWEST**  
**CHIHULY GARDEN AND GLASS**  
**CREATIVE ADVANTAGE**  
**CRYSTAL SPRINGS CO-OP**  
**PRESCHOOL**  
**ENTRE HERMANOS**  
**FEDERAL WAY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**GOETHE POP UP SEATTLE**  
**HOLOCAUST CENTER FOR**  
**HUMANITY**  
**JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS**  
**LEAGUE**  
**JAZZED**  
**KING FM**  
**KNKX**  
**LAUNCH ENRICHMENT**  
**LIVE ALOHA**  
**MARY'S PLACE**  
**MIRABELLA**  
**MUSEUM OF FLIGHT**  
**MUSIC WORKS 4 VETERANS**

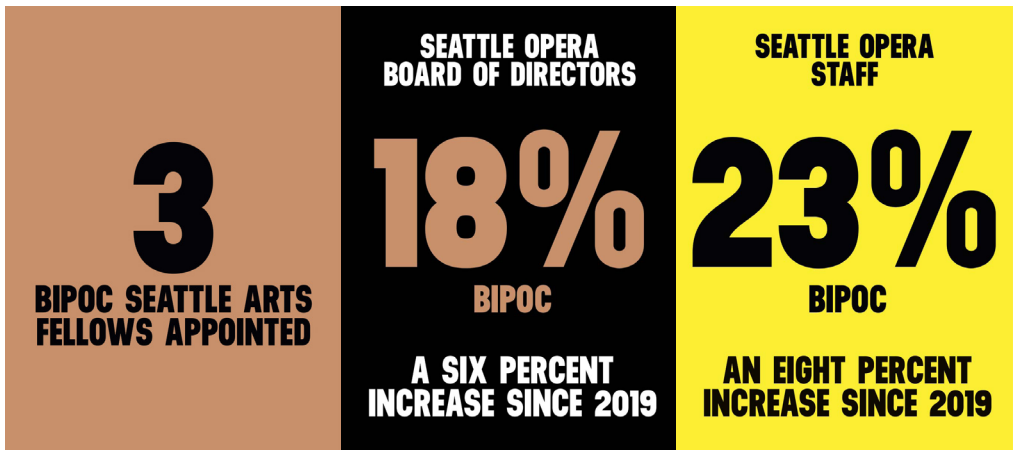
**PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET**  
**PACIFIC SCIENCE CENTER**  
**PATH WITH ART**  
**RED BADGE PROJECT**  
**ROYAL ROOM**  
**SALVATION ARMY SCHOOL OF**  
**MUSIC**  
**SEATTLE ART MUSEUM**  
**SEATTLE CENTER**  
**SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM**  
**FESTIVAL**  
**SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**DISTRICT**  
**SEATTLE REP**  
**SEATTLE SYMPHONY**  
**SEATTLE UNIVERSITY**  
**SEATTLE YOUTH SYMPHONY**  
**ORCHESTRA**  
**ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL**  
**THE DOWNTOWN SCHOOL**  
**...MANY MORE**



# RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL IMPACT

## First Year Progress Report

It has been one year since Seattle Opera released the Racial Equity and Social Impact (RESI) plan. Our focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion in our company is not only the right thing to do for opera it is the right thing to do for our community. In the past year, the RESI plan has come to life with gains made on several strategic priorities. A full update will be issued on our blog in the new year. But a few highlights include the following:



“While we of course have a lot of work to do in this field, from my perspective, Seattle Opera seems to have made significant strides in making racial equity a priority. There’s not only a growing awareness of the importance of this work and a support for these efforts across the staff and board, but an intentionality about following through on our racial equity initiatives. I have the sense that Seattle Opera is a leader in this area among the classical music organizations in our region, if not among the wider industry, and it makes me proud to be associated with Seattle Opera, especially during these times.”

—SEATTLE OPERA STAFF MEMBER



# THANK YOU!

