

# SEATTLE OPERA. THANKFUL



**SUMMER 2023**

Donor Impact Report

# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Photo © Philip Newton



I invite you to discover how your gift to Seattle Opera impacts who appears on our stages, the titles we produce, and the value we add to arts education around the State of Washington. Your financial support enriches everything we do, for which we are deeply grateful.

Thank you so very much.

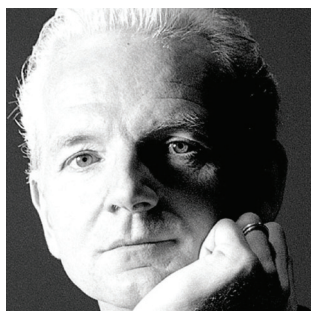
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christina Scheppelmann". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "C" and a long horizontal line at the bottom.

Christina Scheppelmann,  
General Director

# MORE LEGENDARY ARTISTS

## Debating in 2023/24

Your investment in Seattle Opera makes it possible for us to bring incredible artists to McCaw Hall. Next season we're debuting legendary singers, preeminent conductors, and superb designers that you will love and adore!

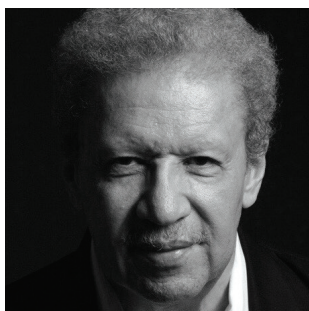


**TIM ALBERY**

***Alcina, Stage Director***

"vigorous dramatic intelligence"

—*Chicago Tribune*



**ANTHONY DAVIS**

***X: The Life & Times of Malcolm X, Composer***

2020 Pulitzer Prize in Music  
American Academy of Arts and Letters



**PEIXIN CHEN**

***Das Rheingold, Fasolt***

"keen, dramatic instinct"

—*Shmopera*



**CÉSAR CORTÉS**

***The Barber of Seville, Count Almaviva***

Best Emerging Voice at the  
Rossini Festival in Wildbad



**DENYCE GRAVES**

***Das Rheingold, Erda***

"One of the great mezzos  
of the 20th century"

—*Operawire*



**LEAH HAWKINS**

***X: The Life & Times of Malcolm X, Louise/Betty***

"vocally and dramatically  
impressive"

—*The Washington Post*



**MEGAN MOORE**

***The Barber of Seville, Rosina***

"elegant vocal gymnastics..."

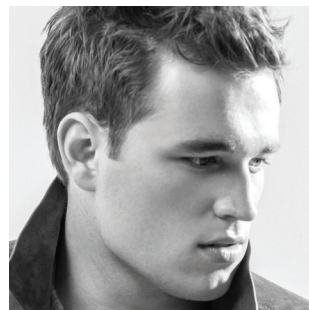
—*Operawire*



**ROBERT O'HARA**

***X: The Life & Times of Malcolm X, Stage Director***

2020 Tony Award for  
Best Direction



**SEAN MICHAEL PLUMB**

***The Barber of Seville, Figaro***

"Elegant lyricism and  
responsive musicality"

—*The New York Times*



# CREATION LAB 2023: FINAL PROJECTS



Photo © David Jaewon Oh

During a recent Creation Lab rehearsal librettist Hannah Nikka Obsinada (l) and composer Grace Oberhofer (r) discuss their opera, *Chop Chop!*

*Hello World* is set in the not too-distant future. Fives, a broken-down service robot, and Vista, a sophisticated android, find refuge in a dark basement. While taking shelter from an indifferent world that sees them as disposable machines, the artificial lifeforms consider sacrificing everything in a desperate bid for freedom. *Hello World* is one of six short operas recently showcased at the 2023 Jane Lang Davis Creation Lab Performances in the Opera Center.

Launched two years ago, Creation Lab cultivates the next generation of opera storytellers, focusing on Washington State composers and librettists ages 18-30 through a months-long development process that includes table

readings, music workshops, and mentoring and coaching from established opera professionals, like librettist Kelley Rourke and composer Damien Geter.

"Creation Lab was an opportunity for me to redirect my music career," explained Kassey Castro, a former K-12 music educator who has also conducted community ensembles throughout the region. Working with librettist Hannah Schoettmer, Castro tapped into his love of video games to guide the score for *Hello World*. "I'm really inspired by the music of Nobuo Uematsu, who wrote the music for the 'Final Fantasy' game series. That sound influenced some of the music I wrote for this opera."



Zach Martin sings the role of Beau in *Chop Chop!*

Other works created this year are *Shaat kot draa blod*, a story based on a Jamaican tale of the Cat Woman; *Chop Chop!* a story about a mother and her two children preparing dinner for her husband's boss; and *Everything After*, which follows Roe, a thirty something Seattleite wondering what they want to be when they grow up.

"This year's creators worked tremendously hard to bring some amazing stories to Seattle Opera," said Dennis Robertson, Jr, Seattle Opera's Director of Programs and Partnerships. "Stories that make you cry, stories that make you laugh, you may even enjoy a fright or two! This impressive and diverse group of musicians and wordsmiths continue to wow me as they begin their journeys in the world of creating opera."

The collaborative nature of Creation Lab—the chance to work with a partner from start to finish—was an important aspect for many of this year's participants. "I often work solo," said *Chop Chop!* composer Grace Oberhofer. "But I find that I need to have somebody else in the room to really understand a piece. So, I was excited about meeting other collaborators from the Pacific Northwest." To produce this new piece,

Oberhofer partnered with librettist Hannah Nikka Odsinada, a two-time participant of Creation Lab. What's more, the artists benefited from the experiences of industry professionals. "Our mentor helped push the storyline through," said librettist and poet Elizabeth Howell, who's opera, *Everything After*, was created with composer Spencer Edgers. "He [librettist Jerre Dye] saw holes in our story and was very helpful making it complete."

For Castro, Creation Lab launched a different phase of his musical journey. "When I left teaching, my family and friends thought my life as a musician was over. But it was just the beginning. I'm excited that I had the chance to restart it with this program," he said.

In 2020, a \$1 million gift established the Jane Lang Davis Creation Fund, an endowed fund to support the initiative's annual programming. Creation Lab is named in honor of Jane Lang Davis, a member of Seattle Opera's Board of Directors for nine years and a longtime member of the Seattle Opera Advisory Board. A subscriber for more than 50 years, she introduced many of her close friends and family to opera.



# NEW OPERAS, NEW STORIES

In recent years Seattle Opera has prioritized the works by living composers and librettists. Your enthusiasm for new works drives our passion to produce operas that are relevant and contemporary. Thank you!



## **BOUND**

**Music by Huang Ruo**

**Libretto by Bao-Long Chu**

**2023**



Photo © Sunny Martini

## **A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS**

**Music by Sheila Silver**

**Libretto by Stephen Kitsakos**

**2023**

Photo © Philip Newton



## **BLUE**

Music by Jeanine Tesori

Libretto by Tazewell Thompson

2022

Photo © Philip Newton



## **CHARLIE PARKER'S YARDBIRD**

Music by Daniel Schnyder

Libretto by Bridgette A. Wimberly

2020

Photo © Philip Newton



## **THE FALLING AND THE RISING**

Music by Zachary Redler

Libretto by Jerre Dye

2019



# LOOKING AHEAD

Photo © Opera Omaha



# X THE LIFE & TIMES OF MALCOLM X

Music by Anthony Davis | Libretto by Thulani Davis  
Story by Christopher Davis  
February—March 2024



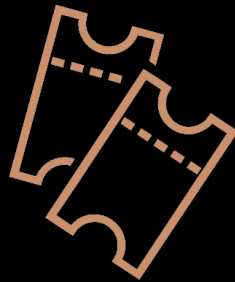
# ON THE ROAD AGAIN

This spring, after a three-year absence, Seattle Opera’s School Opera Tour was on the road. The cast and crew of *Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World* performed 47 times. They crisscrossed the State of Washington, traveling to elementary schools in Seattle, Port Angeles, Toppenish, Marysville, and other towns around the state. The one act bilingual opera tells the story of Mariana, a young girl living in Mexico City who has her portrait painted by Frida Kahlo.



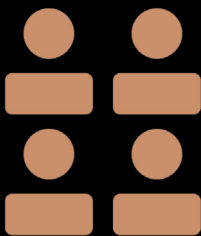
**25**

TITLE I\*  
SCHOOL PERFORMANCES



**47**

TOTAL  
PERFORMANCES



**500+**

LARGEST  
AUDIENCE



**1,089**

MILES  
TRAVELED

**12,891**

CHILDREN  
ENGAGED



\*Schools in which at least 40 percent of the students are from under-resourced families.

Seattle Opera, 

Thank you for  
coming to our school!  
Thank you for singing  
we liked it! my favorite  
character was everything



The performance was truly a great community-building, schoolwide event, and our students thoroughly enjoyed seeing their culture and language represented."

—Jennifer Ching, Teacher,  
Stevenson Elementary School

*Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World* is even better than I expected! I would love to book again next year. Thank you for providing such high-quality art and music for our little learners in a setting that is equally accessible to all students."

—Ambria Boss, Teacher,  
Summitview Elementary

thank you for the OPERA. the OPERA  
is the best.



## FRIDA IN THE PARK

Catch a performance of *Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World* in a public park near you.

Sponsored by the City of Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, four free performances are planned this summer.

July 22, 11:00 AM

August 13, 11:00 AM

Powell Barnett Park

352 Martin Luther King Jr. Way

July 23, 11:00 AM

August 12, 11:00 AM

Highland Park

11 SW Cloverdale Street



# SEATTLE OPERA.

Thank you for  
The music



**LEARN MORE AT  
SEATTLEOPERA.ORG**