

SEATTLE OPERA. THANKFUL

SPRING 2024

Donor Impact Report



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Photo © Philip Newton



This has been an amazingly successful 60th Anniversary Season! And it was made possible by the giant-sized work of Seattle Opera artists and musicians, staff, and crew members, and, of course, you. In this digital Impact Report, I invite you to experience some of our achievements, including the results of the latest School Opera Tour. You can also relive moments from the spectacular Concert and Gala that took place several weeks ago!

With deep appreciation,

Christina Scheppelmann,
General Director

LEADERSHIP THAT MATTERS

In only five short years, Christina Scheppelmann accomplished a lot! Here's brief list.

- **Jane Lang Davis Creation Lab Started**
- **Seattle Arts Fellowship Launched**
- **Resident Artist Positions Begun**
- ***A Thousand Splendid Suns* World Premiered**
- **Seattle Opera Veterans Choir Continued**
- **Sensory Friendly Performances & Sensory Guides Instituted**

CITY & COUNTY RECOGNITION



Seattle Opera General Director Christina Scheppelmann (third from right), members of the Board of Directors, and staff were present when King County Council announced May 11, 2024, as Seattle Opera Day.

In recognition of 60 years of artistic, educational, civic, and economic contributions made by Seattle Opera, King County Council proclaimed Saturday, May 11, 2024, as Seattle Opera Day at the council's April 23 meeting. Then on May 6, Seattle City Council and Mayor Bruce Harrell did the same.

Both proclamations recognized Seattle Opera as an important cultural asset not only for the city and county but for the State of Washington. It thanked Seattle Opera for bringing internationally praised singers to the region, acknowledged the company's dedication to art and music education, and recognized the opera's significant economic impact.

TRAVELING ACROSS WASHINGTON

school opera tour crisscrosses the state

Photo © David Jaewon Oh

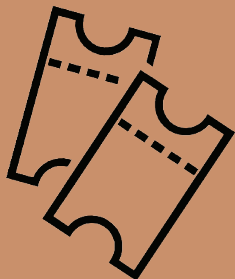


Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers, a 45-minute opera for youth audiences, toured the state this spring. Performances took place in schools and community spaces. The opera fused together folktales from around the world to tell the story of Monkey and his brainy sister, Francine. The siblings learn to cooperate to escape a hungry crocodile and outwit the greedy Lord of the Tigers. Combining multiple music styles from Bollywood, Ethiopian jazz, Latin, and classical, this opera shared the timeless message that we all have different strengths, but when we work together, anything is possible.



Photo © David Jaewon Oh

SCHOOL OPERA TOUR BY THE NUMBERS



60

TOTAL PERFORMANCES



33

TITLE I*

SCHOOL PERFORMANCES

Title One schools are located in communities with the greatest needs



18,000

STUDENTS
ENGAGED



2,150

MILES
TRAVELED

MORE PERFORMANCES

You can also enjoy *Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers* this summer at Seattle Public Parks.

JUNE 22, 11:00 AM

POWELL BARNETT PARK
352 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WAY

JUNE 23 & JULY 20, 11:00 AM

OTHELLO PARK
4351 OTHELLO ST.

JULY 21, 11:00 AM

HIGHLAND PARK
1100 SW CLOVERDALE ST.

60th anniversary concert & gala

SO MUCH TO CELEBRATE

Anniversaries are time to reflect on the past as well as look to the future. Enjoy these moments from our recent 60th Anniversary Concert and Gala. You will see the celebration sets the stage for the next 60 years!



Photo © Philip Newton

Bass-Baritone Greer Grimsley, a Seattle favorite, brought cheers and applause with his performance of Wotan's Farewell from Die Walküre by Richard Wagner.



Photo © Philip Newton

Mary Elizabeth Williams, soprano, shows deep emotion as she sings “My man’s gone now” from George Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess.



Photo © Sunny Martini

U.S. Representative Pramila Jayapal (center) presents Seattle Opera General Director Christina Scheppelmann (left) with a plaque recognizing Scheppelmann’s many contributions to the state’s arts community. Introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Jayapal, the proclamation will be archived in the U.S. Congressional Record. Looking on is concert host and Seattle Opera Board Member Deborah Horne (right).



Photo © Philip Newton

Following the concert, a reception, which featured specialty cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, took place at the McCaw Hall's Prelude Cafe and Outdoor Terrace.



Photo © Philip Newton

The Gala portion of the evening happened on the McCaw Hall stage, where a meal curated by award-winning chef Tom Douglas was served.

Thanks to everyone involved, the Concert & Gala raised \$2.8 million dollars—the most ever raised at a Seattle Opera event!



Photo © Sunny Martini

The occasion culminated with an auction and raise paddle.

JUBILEE: THE CREATION OF A NEW OPERA



Photo © Library of Congress

Founding members of the Fisk University Jubilee Singer, 1870.

Set in the aftermath of the Civil War, this new opera tells the story of how the Fisk Jubilee Singers came together to change music forever. Featuring more than 40 spirituals, *Jubilee* follows the ensemble's early tours, which raised money for the fledgling Fisk University. The performances introduced Black music to the world. The group faced threats of violence and discrimination at every turn, but it persevered, and saved the school.

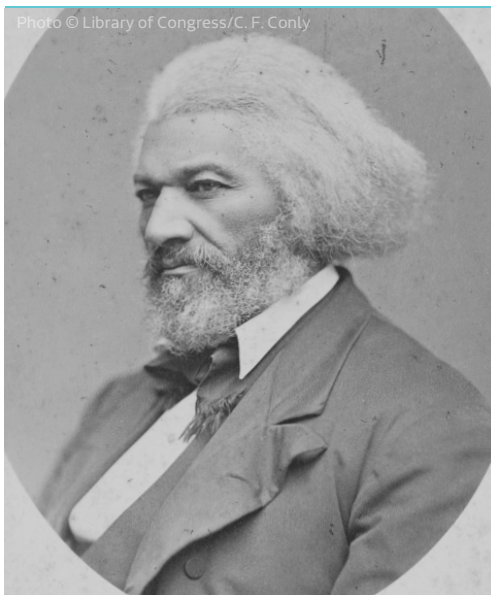


Photo © Fabian Obispo

Tazewell Thompson is the creator of Jubilee. Seattle Opera staged Blue, his other opera in 2022.

A PBS documentary about the Fisk Jubilee Singers sparked the curiosity of creator and director Tazewell Thompson to learn more about the group. His obsession led to reading and collecting a vast array of books, sheet music, vinyl records, and CDs. A commission to create a play was Thompson's opportunity to share the story broadly. And our opera adaptation brings the narrative to a brand-new audience. The production features vocal arrangements by Dianne Adams McDowell and orchestration by Michael Ellis Ingram.

Photo © Library of Congress/C. F. Conly



Abolitionist Frederick Douglass was one of the many supporters of the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

THE ROAD TO PROMINENCE

In 1871, struggling under the burden of indebtedness, Fisk University faced an uncertain future and foreclosure. So, on October 6, a group of student singers, launched an unthinkable campaign to raise funds for their school. Fortified by faith and the meager resources in the school's treasury to cover travel expenses, the students toured the Midwest performing music they learned while working in the fields, worshipping in secret, and gathering in plantation cabins. They struggled at first, but their voices struck the hearts of audiences throughout the US and then Europe. Among their most ardent admirers were former enslaved abolitionist Frederick Douglass, novelist and humorist Mark Twain, and British Prime Minister William Gladstone.

Photo © Library of Congress



Fisk University, Jubilee Hall, 1900.

FISK UNIVERSITY

Barely six months after the end of the Civil War and just two months after Emancipation Proclamation, the Fisk School was established on the grounds of a former Union Army barracks in Nashville, Tennessee. Named in honor of General Clinton B. Fisk, a superintendent of the Freedmen's Bureau, the first classes were held on January 9, 1866. The first students—ages 7 to 70—shared the common experience of slavery and poverty and an extraordinary desire to learn. Today, Fisk University is ranked among the best Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the country. With an enrollment of more than 1,000 undergraduate students, Fisk offers numerous baccalaureate programs as well as advance degree programs in biology, chemistry, clinical psychology, and physics. Scholar W.E.B. Dubois, historian John Hope Franklin, poet Nikki Giovanni, singer Roland Hayes, and U.S. Congressman John Lewis are just a few of the institution's more famous alumni.

SEATTLE OPERA.

Photo © Philip Newton



Energetic,
engaged,
entertaining...
from the downbeat to the final note.

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