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Afghan arts festival leads slate of winter events at Seattle Opera

**Educational and cultural events complement
A Thousand Splendid Suns world premiere**

**Youth opera *The Jungle Book*
offers unique take on familiar tale**

**School Opera Tour returns
with *Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World***

SEATTLE, WA—In conjunction with its upcoming world premiere of [*A Thousand Splendid Suns*](#), Seattle Opera offers a slate of unique educational and cultural events to celebrate Afghan art, culture, and history, and provide a deeper look into the making of a new opera.

First up is [*Jashin: A Celebration of Afghan Arts*](#), a cultural festival highlighting the remarkable achievements of Afghan artists. The lineup of events on **Saturday, February 11**, includes a concert by world-renowned rubab player [Homayoun Sakhi](#), an exhibition of rescued artworks by the artist-activist group [ArtLords](#), the unveiling of an embroidery project created by local Afghan women in partnership with [Refugee Artisan Initiative](#), and a presentation by film director and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* stage director, **Roya Sadat**. The event will also feature opportunities to support local Afghan artists and refugees through financial and supply donations.

Jashin offers northwest audiences the chance to learn more about Afghan culture and engage with a community that has recently resettled in western Washington. "Since the American withdrawal from Afghanistan last summer, Washington state has welcomed thousands of Afghan refugees who worked and fought alongside Americans during the decades-long conflict with the Taliban," said **Lokela Alexander Minami**, associate director of community engagement. "Despite this, the American public knows little about Afghanistan's rich and diverse culture. *Jashin* offers an opportunity to celebrate this culture, and we hope our audiences will come away with an appreciation of contemporary Afghan music and art, as well as an understanding of how they can help support our new Afghan neighbors."

Other events connected to *A Thousand Splendid Suns* include an **Opera Talk** with the creators of the opera, a film screening of director Roya Sadat's ***A Letter to the President***, a special **Community Conversation** on International Women's Day, and a recital from cast member **John Moore**.

Beyond *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the winter also features engaging opportunities for opera fans of all ages, including Kamala Sankaram and Kelley Rourke's ***The Jungle Book***, a retelling of the classic story performed by Seattle Opera's youth program participants. In March, **School Opera Tour** returns with ***Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World***, a charming production coming to 50 schools across Washington State, in addition to public performances in June. And finally, on April 4, local favorites **Martin Bakari** and **Ellaina Lewis** team up with Tacoma pianist **Joe Williams** for a recital program featuring musical settings of Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poetry.

Event Information

- ***The Jungle Book***

February 3–5, The Opera Center

Join Seattle Opera and our talented cast of youth performers for the Youth Opera Project production of *The Jungle Book*. This unique take on the familiar tale is based on both Eastern and Western classical music traditions and focuses on how the wolf pack welcomes Mowgli into their fold in a beautiful story of compassion, justice, and forgiveness. Tickets and info at seattleopera.org/junglebook. Availability is limited.

- ***Jashin: A Celebration of Afghan Arts***

Saturday, February 11, from 1:00–5:30 PM, The Opera Center

Spend your afternoon at the Opera Center and experience a cultural festival celebrating Afghan history, culture, and arts. Info and RSVP at seattleopera.org/jashin.

- ***A Letter to the President* film screening**

Sunday, February 12, at 1:00 PM, SIFF Film Center

Presented in partnership with **SIFF**, *A Letter to the President* is the second feature film by Afghan film producer, director, and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* director, **Roya Sadat**. Called a “righteously compelling feminist drama” by *Variety*, the film was Afghanistan’s entry for Foreign Language Film at the 2018 Oscars. Includes post-film Q&A with director Roya Sadat. Tickets and info at seattleopera.org/siff.

- **Opera Talk: The Creators Behind *A Thousand Splendid Suns***

Friday, February 24, at 7:00 PM, The Opera Center

Hear from the team of creatives who took on the challenge of adapting Khaled Hosseini’s bestselling novel for the opera stage: composer **Sheila Silver**, librettist **Stephen Kitsakos**, conductor **Viswa Subbaraman**, and stage director **Roya Sadat**. Info and RSVP at seattleopera.org/sunstalk.

- **John Moore in Recital**

Thursday, March 2, at 7:30 PM, The Opera Center

Fresh off his debut as Rasheed in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, John Moore has prepared a special recital program to highlight his “smooth, suave high baritone and exceptionally handsome stage presence” (*OperaWire*). Tickets and info at seattleopera.org/johnmoore.

- **School Opera Tour: *Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World***

Touring March–May 2023; public performances June 25, The Opera Center

The School Opera Tour is back! This spring, our cast of professional performers brings this charming story of beauty and bravery to 50 schools across Washington State. More info at seattleopera.org/classes-camps-clubs/for-schools/school-opera-tours/ for school tours and seattleopera.org/frida for public performances.

- **Community Conversation: Celebrating Afghan Women’s Resilience**

Wednesday, March 8, at 7:00 PM, The Opera Center

In this special International Women’s Day event co-hosted by [Refugee Women’s Alliance](http://RefugeeWomen’sAlliance) and [Refugee Artisan Initiative](http://RefugeeArtisanInitiative), learn more about the vital work being done in our community to support local Afghan women refugees and women still living in Afghanistan. Info and RSVP at seattleopera.org/resilience.

- **Women in Opera webinar**

Every Wednesday March 29–May 3 (6 sessions), from 2–3 PM, online

Join **Judy Tsou**, UW Head Music Librarian Emeritus, as she illuminates women’s involvement in opera as creators, directors, and conductors and scrutinizes opera’s often troubling treatment of women as characters. Info and registration at seattleopera.org/classes-camps-clubs/for-adults/opera-classes/women-in-opera/.

- **Recital: “From His Heart’s Deep Core”**

Tuesday, April 4, at 7:30 PM, The Opera Center

Seattle Opera favorites **Martin Bakari** (*The Marriage of Figaro*) and **Ellaina Lewis** (*Blue*) team up with Tacoma pianist **Joe Williams** for a special night of opera, classical art song, and jazz. The program will feature music from Richard Thompson and other African American composers, with settings of Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poetry, which has resonated with and inspired artists for generations across many musical genres. Tickets and info at seattleopera.org/recital.

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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