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***Alcina*, Handel's seductive story of sorcery, comes to Seattle Opera for the first time**

**Conductor Christine Brandes leads cast of returning stars
in production by English stage director Tim Albery**

SEATTLE—There's much more to George Frideric Handel than just the *Messiah*, the composer's perennial holiday favorite. With over 40 operas to his name, opera is what truly made him famous, and October's production of [*Alcina*](#) shows off Handel at his most enchanting. Showcasing this opera's wonderful melodies, strong characters, and vocal pyrotechnics for the first time on the Seattle Opera stage, Handel's story of sorcery and seduction is certain to leave audiences spellbound.

"*Alcina* is an intense piece with phenomenal music," said **General Director Christina Scheppelmann**. "Although it has some fantastical elements to its story, it is, at its heart, a story about love and human relationships. The opera speaks very clearly about the connections between seduction, romance, and power, and what happens when traditional power dynamics are turned on their heads. I think you'll be surprised at just how strikingly modern this piece is."

Leading the performance in her Seattle Opera conducting debut is **Christine Brandes**, whose previous performances as Morgana in *Alcina* influence her nuanced and informed take on this celebrated Handel opera.

"Being a singer and having been on the other side of the pit is sort of my superpower," said Brandes, who made her Seattle Opera singing debut as Cleopatra in Handel's *Julius Caesar* ('07). "It gives me a much more intuitive relationship with the singers and the ability to react more quickly and subtly to their needs. *Alcina* is

a visceral piece with such fully realized, relatable characters—I hope the audience feels immediately drawn into the emotional landscape of the story and swept along by this amazing music.”

The intimate production by celebrated English stage director **Tim Albery**, which first played at Opera North in 2022, sets *Alcina*’s intense emotional drama in a world that evokes the private tropical-island retreats of the rich and famous.

“The small group of people we find on Alcina’s island appears to live a life of pure pleasure and leisure,” said Albery, who also makes his Seattle Opera debut. “But beneath the surface, Alcina manipulates and controls each of her lovers until she is bored by them, then moves on to the next. The abandoned one is left discarded, all humanity gone, an empty shell, a rock, a wild beast. And so it might continue until Alcina falls in love herself; then she and her companions, led by Handel’s glorious, heart-wrenching music, are drawn into the depths of the forest—the heart of darkness—searching desperately for the new dawn which will eventually arrive.”

The rest of the creative team—Scenic and Costume Designer **Hannah Clark**, Lighting Designer **Matthew Richardson**, and Video Designer **Ian William Galloway**—will all be making their Seattle Opera debuts.

The superb cast is made up entirely of tried-and-true Seattle Opera favorites, with soprano **Vanessa Goikoetxea** (Donna Anna, *Don Giovanni*, ’21) in the title role, soprano **Sharleen Joynt** (Amore, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, ’22) as Morgana, countertenor **Randall Scotting** (Refugee, *Flight*, ’21) as Ruggiero, mezzo-soprano **Ginger Costa-Jackson** (Musetta, *La bohème*, ’21 and Carmen, *Carmen*, ’19) as Bradamante, **John Marzano** (Gastone de Letorières, *La traviata*, ’23) as Oronte, and **Nina Yoshida Nelsen** (Khanh, *Bound*, ’23) as Melissa.

For audiences inspired to go beyond the stage and learn more about the opera industry, Seattle Opera offers a pair of events that explore the experiences of today’s opera professionals. The first, an [Opera Talk](#) titled “**A Singer’s Journey**,” features Seattle Opera’s [Resident Artists](#) in conversation about what it takes to become an opera singer, while the second, a [Community Conversation](#) titled “**Gender Fluidity in Opera**,” navigates opera’s long history of subverting gender norms, from castrati to pants roles for women and much more.

- **Opera Talk: “A Singer’s Journey”**
Thursday, September 28, 7:00 PM, Tagney Jones Hall
Info and RSVP at seattleopera.org/singersjourney
- **Community Conversation: “Gender Fluidity in Opera”**
Wednesday, October 18, 7:00 PM, Tagney Jones Hall
Info and RSVP at seattleopera.org/genderinopera

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 50,000 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.

Performance Information

- Music by George Frideric Handel; libretto by an unidentified poet, adapted from an earlier opera based on Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*
- Sung in Italian with English subtitles
- Run time approx. 2 hours 50 minutes with one intermission
- Tickets \$35–299

McCaw Hall (321 Mercer Street, Seattle, WA 98109)

Saturday, October 14, at 7:30 PM

Sunday, October 15, at 2:00 PM

Friday, October 20, at 7:30 PM

Sunday, October 22, at 2:00 PM

Wednesday, October 25, at 7:30 PM

Saturday, October 28, at 7:30 PM

Conductor: Christine Brandes†

Director: Tim Albery†

Scenic and Costume Designer: Hannah Clark†

Lighting Designer: Matthew Richardson†

Video Designer: Ian William Galloway†

Alcina: Vanessa Goikoetxea

Morgana: Sharleen Joynt

Ruggiero: Randall Scotting

Bradamante: Ginger Costa-Jackson

Oronte: John Marzano

Melissa: Nina Yoshida Nelsen

† = Seattle Opera debut

Tickets and information at seattleopera.org/alcina.

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