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***Samson and Delilah in Concert* brings musical powerhouse to Seattle Opera for first time since 1965**

Two world-renowned singers make Seattle Opera debuts, including Grammy Award-winning Tacoma native J’Nai Bridges

**Only two performances: January 20 & 22, 2023
McCaw Hall**

SEATTLE, WA—For the first time since 1965, Seattle Opera presents Camille Saint-Saëns’ monumental ***Samson and Delilah*** (1877), an evocative retelling of the biblical tale of obsession, lust, and revenge. This musical tour de force, presented in a new concert format with on-stage orchestra and chorus, features some of classical music’s most iconic melodies, from the sensual “Mon cœur s’ouvre à ta voix” to the frenzied Act III Bacchanale.

Headlining the performances are two world-renowned singers making their Seattle Opera debuts. Appearing as Delilah is Grammy Award-winning Tacoma native **J’Nai Bridges**. Known for her “plush-voiced mezzo-soprano” (*The New York Times*) and “calmly commanding stage presence” (*The New Yorker*), Bridges is one of the most in-demand artists of her generation.

For Bridges, making her Seattle Opera debut is more than homecoming, it’s a chance to give back to her community. “It’s truly a special thing for me to come home to my village,” said Bridges, whose family still lives in Lakewood, Washington.

"There are so many people from Seattle, Tacoma, and Lakewood that have poured so much love into me that it really feels that this performance in McCaw Hall is a gift. It will be the highlight of my career so far."

Playing opposite Bridges is **Yonghoon Lee**, widely regarded as one of the world's best lyric tenors, making his role debut as Samson. For Lee, *Samson and Delilah in Concert* provides a keenly anticipated opportunity. "For a long time, I've wanted to sing this role," said Lee, who appears this season at the Wiener Staatsoper, the Gran Teatre del Liceu, and the Royal Opera House. "It's a masterpiece! I'm happy and thrilled to debut this dream role."

At the helm is Seattle Symphony Conductor Emeritus **Ludovic Morlot**, who has championed French music for Seattle audiences since his arrival in the city in 2011. Rounding out the cast are Seattle favorite **Greer Grimsley** as the High Priest of Dagon, **Andrew Potter** as Abimelech, **John Marzano** as the Philistine Messenger, and **Daniel Sumegi** as the Old Hebrew. Also featured is the excellent 52-member Seattle Opera chorus, prepared by Chorus Master **Michaella Calzaretta**.

Samson and Delilah provides audiences a rare chance to hear one of the grandest, most lyrically stunning works in the repertory, played by some of the leading performers in the industry. "You come to the opera for exciting music and fantastic singing, and that's exactly what you'll get with this event," said Seattle Opera General Director **Christina Scheppelmann**. "The piece is so grand in scope, and yet it contains some of the most beautiful and sensual music in all of opera. It's a real showpiece for all the splendid musical talent we have on display."

Finally, audiences will have the chance to deepen their knowledge of this fascinating work with an **Opera Talk** by Seattle Opera scholar-in-residence, **Dr. Naomi André**:

- **Opera and Imperialism: Saint-Saëns' *Samson and Delilah* and the Representation of the "Other"**

Thursday, January 19, at 7:00 PM, Tagney Jones Hall

Join us for a one-of-a-kind Opera Talk exploring issues of orientalism, cultural representation, and musical exoticism in opera. Info and RSVP at seattleopera.org/operaimperialism.

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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