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Winter youth programs at Seattle Opera offer chances for friendship and learning

**Education programs bolstered by Hearst Foundations grant
for developing partnership with Highline Public Schools**

**Plus, Seattle Opera Chorus "Around the Sound" tour
brings concerts to Mount Vernon, Vashon Island**

SEATTLE—Seattle Opera has a full slate of youth activities planned for the winter, providing opportunities for performance, music education, and community-building for students across Washington State. From the **Youth Opera Project** to the annual **School Opera Tour**, Seattle Opera offers several different ways for youth to incorporate the magic of music and theater into their lives.

Community events planned in conjunction with the company's upcoming production of [**X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X**](#) will be announced in early January 2024.

Seattle Opera's lineup of youth education programs comes on the heels of a recently announced \$250,000 [**Hearst Foundations grant**](#) for developing programs and strengthening partnerships with Highline Public Schools. The grant builds on Seattle Opera's existing in-school K–12 programs, which, over the past decade, have built a consistent presence in Washington State schools, working to provide access to a spectrum of music education programs at every grade level, as a regular part of the annual curriculum.

"Seattle Opera is honored to have received this grant from the Hearst Foundations, which will help us deepen our relationships with schools in South King County," said **Dennis Robinson Jr., Director of Programs and Partnerships**. "Every child has the right to a rigorous and comprehensive arts education, and Seattle Opera is committed to doing our part in ensuring that right is realized, whether through these grant-funded programs in the Highline Public Schools or through the rest of Seattle Opera's many youth programs."

The Hearst Foundations grant will amplify the work Seattle Opera is already doing to engage with students and schools across the region. "I am thrilled to be able to engage with youth in so many different capacities," said **Sara Litchfield, Associate Director of Youth Programs**. "Whether we're providing first introductions to opera or giving more experienced performers new ways to express themselves, Seattle Opera is committed to providing multiple entry points into the arts. I look forward to working with the next cohort of youth audiences and performers this winter."

First up in Seattle Opera's lineup of winter youth programming is an [Opera Camp](#) exploring Fairytales & Folklore, offered in partnership with [Seattle Children's Theatre](#) February 20–23. Working with two expert teaching artists, students will learn the fundamentals of stage performing, combining the arts of acting, singing, and dancing to tell immersive and engaging stories.

Next, March 8–17, the student performers from Seattle Opera's **Youth Opera Project** will present six public performances of [Rootabaga Country](#), a quirky adventure story from composer and librettist **Rachel J. Peters**. Following two siblings who travel down the Zigzag Railroad with their father to learn more about the mother they never knew, *Rootabaga Country* is a catchy and inspiring story about love and family.

Rounding out the slate of youth programs for the winter, from March through May, Seattle Opera's **School Opera Tour** production of [Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers](#) will travel to over 50 schools across Washington State. This 45-minute opera from **composer Kamala Sankaram** and **librettist David Johnston** features a vibrant and eclectic score that combines elements of Bollywood, Ethiopian jazz, Latin, and European classical music. With a story that fuses folktales from around the world, this charming production is perfect for families and children of all ages. Limited tour slots still remain, and Title I Schools are eligible to receive performances at no cost; interested schools may sign up at seattleopera.org/tour. Public performances will be given at Tagney Jones Hall on June 8 and 9.

Beyond youth programming, the winter season offers additional opportunities to experience opera outside the mainstage. In fact, the School Opera Tour is not the only show hitting the road this winter: the **Seattle Opera Chorus** also embarks on its first-ever tour of the Puget Sound region this January, with performances planned at [McIntyre Performing Arts & Conference Center in Mount Vernon](#) on Friday, January 26, and at [Vashon Center for the Arts on Vashon Island](#) on Sunday, January 28.

Featuring selections from works such as **Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci***, **Benjamin Britten's *Gloriana***, and **Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land***, these tour concerts will illustrate the many different faces the opera chorus inhabits on the opera stage. "They're sailors, they're townsfolk, they're witches, they're soldiers—they play all these different characters," said **Chorus Master Michaela Calzaretta**. "Each role is so pivotal because it embodies the community in any given show, grounding it in time and place. The result has been some of the most spectacular music in the operatic repertory."

Finally, fans of the Pacific Science Center's popular laser shows can look forward to the return of [Laser Opera](#) on January 20. Narrated by **Dramaturg Jonathan Dean**, this year's Laser Opera will feature a selection of recordings from prominent Black opera singers choreographed to a stunning, live laser show.

Event Information:

- **Laser Opera**
Saturday, January 20, at 5 PM, Pacific Science Center Laser Dome
Tickets and info at seattleopera.org/laseropera.
- **Seattle Opera Chorus "Around the Sound" tour**
Two performances:
—January 26 at 7:30 PM, McIntyre Performing Arts & Conference Center
—January 28 at 2:30 PM, Vashon Center for the Arts
Tickets and information at seattleopera.org/chorusconcerts.
- **Opera Camp: Fairytales & Folklore**
February 20–23 from 9 AM–4 PM, The Opera Center
Info and registration at seattleopera.org/operacamps.
- **Youth Opera Project: Rootabaga Country**
Six performances: March 8–17, Tagney Jones Hall
Tickets and info at seattleopera.org/rootabaga.
- **School Opera Tour: *Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers***
Touring March–May; public performances June 8 & 9, Tagney Jones Hall
More info at seattleopera.org/tour for school tours and seattleopera.org/monkey for public performances.

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.

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