

SEATTLE OPERA.

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Epic music rocks McCaw Hall in *Nabucco*

**Seattle Opera's new production brings audiences closer
to the onstage action**

August 8-22, 2015

SEATTLE – Come experience the power of music on a whole new level at the Seattle Opera premiere of Giuseppe Verdi's *Nabucco* this August. Viewers will be visually transported to ancient Babylon through magnificent costumes, awe-inspiring projections, and a new staging configuration that brings the music and performers closer to the audience than ever before.

Before Verdi composed *Aida*, *La traviata*, and *Rigoletto*, some of the world's most treasured operas, *Nabucco* was his first operatic masterpiece. In fact, *Nabucco*'s famous chorus, "Va, pensiero," is so beloved in the composer's native Italy, it's become somewhat of an unofficial Italian anthem.

"*Nabucco* has everything that an audience looks for in an opera: a strong, uncompromising, almost Shakespearean drama told through music that's thrilling and direct," said **General Director Aidan Lang**. "It demands virtuoso singing from its protagonists, and we have lined up a stellar cast that will deliver the work to its full potential. Coupled with an innovative staging concept, we have all the ingredients for a truly compelling night in the theater."

The opera tells the story of Nebuchadnezzar (or “Nabucco”), the mad king of Babylon who declares himself God. The powerful, fearsome Abigaille, daughter of one of his wives, feeds his ego in her own quest for power; meanwhile Nabucco’s own daughter, Fenena, resists her father and helps the enslaved Hebrews escape from bondage. In this powerful epic, Verdi uses an Old Testament story to give voice to a people yearning for freedom.

The star-studded cast includes bass-baritone **Gordon Hawkins** as Babylon’s unhinged ruler and soprano **Mary Elizabeth Williams** as the fierce Abigaille. Both of these celebrated artists wowed audiences in *Porgy and Bess* (2010), Hawkins as the title character and Williams as Serena, [the performance for which she won the Seattle Opera Artist of the Year Award](#). Hawkins has starred in many Seattle Opera productions, including *Il trovatore* (2010) and the *Ring* (2009), and Williams most recently gave a passionate performance as the title character in *Tosca* (2015). Additionally, one of the opera world’s hottest rising stars, **Jamie Barton**, makes her Seattle Opera debut fresh off [her win of the prestigious 2015 Richard Tucker Award](#).

Returning singers include tenor **Russell Thomas**. Most recently the title character in *The Tales of Hoffmann* (2014), Thomas will sing Ismaele, the Israelite whom Fenena loves. **Weston Hurt**, baritone, will sing Nabucco in the alternate cast. Hurt made his Seattle Opera debut as Germont in *La traviata* (2009) and returned to sing Ford in *Falstaff* (2010).

Also making company debuts are the two singers in the role of Zaccaria, the Hebrew High Priest: **Christian Van Horn**, bass-baritone, and **Andreas Bauer**, bass, (alternate cast). Soprano **Raffaella Angeletti** stars alongside Bauer in the alternate cast as Abigaille. Other featured singers include **Jonathan Silvia** (High Priest of Baal), **Eric Neuville** (Abdallo), and **Karen Early Evans** (Anna).

Nabucco premieres Saturday, August 8, and runs through Saturday, August 22. Running simultaneously with Verdi’s epic is the world premiere of [An American Dream](#) (August 21 and 23), which also explores themes of exile and belonging.

Tickets are available online at seattleopera.org or by calling 206.389.7676 or 800.426.1619. Tickets may also be purchased at the Box Office by visiting 1020 John Street (two blocks west of Fairview), Monday to Friday between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Ticket prices start at \$25. Groups save 15 percent: 206.676.5588. Seattle Opera Ticket Office: 206.389.7676/800.426.1619. Online orders: seattleopera.org.

Follow #SONabucco on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and listen to excerpts of the opera on [Soundcloud](#).

Production Sponsors: Seattle Opera Foundation and Kreielsheimer Endowment Fund.

NABUCCO

Music by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Temistocle Solera
In Italian with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performances: August 8 - 22, 2015

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours and 30 minutes
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinee at 2:00 p.m.

Premiere: Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Italy, on March 9, 1842
Seattle Opera premiere

Cast:

Nabucco	Gordon Hawkins Weston Hurt *
Abigaille	Mary Elizabeth Williams Raffaella Anceletti † *
Zaccaria	Christian Van Horn † Andreas Bauer † *
Fenena	Jamie Barton †
Ismaele	Russell Thomas
High Priest of Baal	Jonathan Silvia
Abdallo	Eric Neuville
Anna	Karen Early Evans
Conductor	Carlo Montanaro
Director	François Racine
Set Design	Robert Schaub and Seattle Opera technical staff
Video Design	Robert Bonniol, MODE Studios Principal Designer
Costume Design	Ginette Grenier †
Lighting Design	Duane Schuler
Hair & Makeup Design	Joyce Degenfelder
English Captions	Jonathan Dean
Sets and Costumes	Seattle Opera

† Seattle Opera Debut

* On August 9, 14, & 19

Nabucco/An American Dream

Free Public Previews

7/21/2015, noon, Freeland Library
7/21/2015, 2 p.m., Coupeville Library
7/24/2015, 2 p.m., Everett Library
7/26/2015, 2 p.m., Frye Museum
7/29/2015, 6:30 p.m., Edmonds Library
8/4/2015, 2 p.m., Queen Anne Library
8/4/2015, 7 p.m., Third Place Books
8/5/2015, 2 p.m., Ballard Library
8/6/2015, noon, Seattle Central Library

About Seattle Opera

Seattle Opera is a leading opera company, recognized both in the United States and around the world. The company is committed to advancing the cultural life in the Pacific Northwest with performances of the highest caliber, and through innovative education and community programs that take opera far beyond

the McCaw Hall stage. Each year, more than 95,000 people attend Seattle Opera performances and the company's programs serve more than 400,000 people of all ages (including school performances, radio broadcasts and community engagement initiatives). Seattle Opera is especially known for its acclaimed works in the Richard Wagner canon, and has created an "international attraction" in its presentation of Wagner's epic *Ring*, according to *The New York Times*.