

SEATTLE OPERA.

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Seattle Opera Announces Bold 2025/26 Season featuring McCaw Hall Premieres and LGBTQ+ Representation

General and Artistic Director James Robinson's first full season at Seattle Opera blends beloved classics, a hidden gem, and a groundbreaking new work

SEATTLE –Today, Seattle Opera's General and Artistic Director James Robinson announced the 2025/26 mainstage season, his first full season at the helm. The company's 62nd season offers three McCaw Hall premieres: a swashbuckling comedy, a rarely performed Strauss gem, and a moving piece of LGBTQ+ history coming to the mainstage, before concluding with one of the most popular operas of all time.

"Seattle Opera is committed to making opera both timeless and timely," said General and Artistic Director James Robinson. "Our 2025/26 season is a celebration of opera's vast emotional and stylistic landscape. From the high-spirited hilarity of *The Pirates of Penzance* and the intimate tragedy of *Daphne* to the sweeping passion of *Carmen* and the poignant urgency of *Fellow Travelers*, we are producing stories that entertain, challenge, and move us. We are thrilled to be showcasing opera talent from around the world who will join forces with our artistic partners from the Seattle Symphony Orchestra."

Swashbuckling Comedy: *The Pirates of Penzance* October 18, 19, 24, 26, 28, 29; November 1, 2025

The season opens with Seattle Opera's first-ever Gilbert and Sullivan: the rambunctious seafaring adventure, *The Pirates of Penzance*. Cheered by the *Wall Street Journal* for its "witty directing and choreography that kept the stage pictures fizzing," the **Seán Curran** production has delighted audiences and critics at The Atlanta Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and The Glimmerglass Festival. An excellent cast of international opera talent features several company debuts, including Reginald Smith,

Jr. as the Pirate King, Thomas Glass as Major-General Stanley, David Portillo as Frederic, Vanessa Becerra as Mabel, and Katharine Goeldner as Ruth. David Charles Abell will conduct.

Rare Gem: *Daphne in Concert*
January 16, 18, 2026

Seattle Opera continues its string of celebrated concert stagings—including *Les Troyens* in 2025 and *Samson and Delilah* in 2023—with a rarely performed one-act masterpiece by Richard Strauss. *Daphne* features some of the composer’s most lush writing for orchestra. Heidi Stober, hailed by *Opera News* as a “distinctly American lyric soprano that makes the rest of the world listen,” makes her Seattle Opera debut in the title role following recent successes in Berlin, Dresden, Zurich, and London. The cast also features David Butt Philip as Apollo and Melody Wilson (Fricka, *Das Rheingold* ’23) as Gaea with the German-born conductor of the Spanish National Orchestra and Chorus David Afkham on the podium.

LGBTQ+ History: *Fellow Travelers*
February 21, 22, 25, 27, 28; March 1, 2026

One of the most frequently performed new operas of the past decade, *Fellow Travelers* explores forbidden love during McCarthyism. The “gorgeous music” highlights its recognition in *The New York Times*’ Best of Classical Music 2016 list. The story is a riveting piece of historical fiction, adapted by composer **Gregory Spears** and librettist **Greg Pierce** from the Thomas Mallon novel—recently released as a Showtime mini-series. Set during the Lavendar Scare, a time of gay persecution in the federal government, the opera follows the forbidden love affair of Timothy Laughlin, a recent college graduate eager to join the fight against Communism, and Hawkins Fuller, a seductive State Department official. Tenors **Andres Acosta** (Nemorino, *The Elixir of Love* ’22) and **Colin Aikins** share the role of Timothy, while baritones **Joseph Lattanzi** (Steward, *Flight* ’21) and **Jarrett Ott** share the role of Hawkins.

Seattle Opera presents *Fellow Travelers* in collaboration with New York-based artistic collective **Up Until Now**, in a national project that brings this important story to stages across the country. This special initiative, which is launching in Seattle, is one of the largest consortium projects within the US opera industry and is headed by director Kevin Newbury (*The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* ’19) and producer Jecca Barry.

“As we prepare to celebrate the opera’s 10th Anniversary, I have been reflecting on my values as an artist, especially as a queer artist making work during these uncertain times,” says Newbury. “I believe that we stand on the shoulders of the people that came before us who fought so hard and sacrificed so much for us to have the rights we have today. I believe in the power of art to build community. And I believe in the power of a good love story. And *Fellow Travelers* is, first and foremost, a good love story.”

Sizzling Classic: *Carmen*
May 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17, 2026

A cast of opera’s brightest stars brings Bizet’s *Carmen* to life in a fiery season finale, supported by the Seattle Opera Chorus under the baton of Ludovic Morlot (*Les Troyens* ’25). The fierce heroine will be sung by **Sasha Cooke** in her role debut (Hansel, *Hansel and Gretel* ’16) and Tacoma native **J’Nai**

Bridges (Dido, *Les Troyens* '25), with Matthew Cairns and Ryan Capozza as the dangerously jealous Don José. Company debuts will be made by Kathleen O'Mara as Micaëla, and Christian Pursell and Benjamin Taylor as Escamillo.

“Carmen has been a dream role of mine as long as I can remember,” said Cooke. “Debuting the role at Seattle Opera, where 18 years prior I sang in the Young Artists Program, will have special meaning.”

Additional Programming:

Student performances, classes, Edith Piaf showcase, and Holiday Cheer

More performances, classes, and holiday programming will provide a wide variety of opportunities for audiences of all ages to deepen their love and appreciation for the opera art form throughout the 2025/26 season. Following on the success of the *Jubilee* school day matinee, which more than 1500 students attended, *The Pirates of Penzance* performances include a Tuesday, October 28 matinee. In November, Grammy Award-winning soprano Patricia Racette performs songs of famous French cabaret singer Édith Piaf in an “unforgettable evening concert” (*The Daily Californian*). A major highlight to ring in the holiday season is ***Gay Apparel***, hosted by tenor **John Marzano** (Beppe, *Pagliacci* '24) hosting as his drag persona, Anita Spritzer.

Season tickets and more information available at seattleopera.org.

Performance Information (see full cast lists at seattleopera.org)

The Pirates of Penzance

- Music by Arthur Sullivan
- Libretto by W.S. Gilbert
- Conducted by David Charles Abell
- Directed and Choreographed by Seán Curran
- October 18, 19, 24, 26, 28, 29, November 1, 2025
- McCaw Hall (321 Mercer St, Seattle, WA 98109)
- seattleopera.org/pirates

Gay Apparel: A Holiday Show

- December 12 & 13, 2025
- The Opera Center (363 Mercer St, Seattle, WA 98109)
- seattleopera.org/gayapparel

Daphne in Concert

- Music by Richard Strauss
- Libretto by Joseph Gregor
- January 16 & 18, 2026
- McCaw Hall (321 Mercer St, Seattle, WA 98109)
- seattleopera.org/daphne

Fellow Travelers

- Music by Gregory Spears
- Libretto by Greg Pierce
- Conducted by Patrick Summers
- Directed by Kevin Newbury
- February 21, 22, 25, 27, 28, & March 1, 2026
- The Opera Center (363 Mercer St, Seattle, WA 98109)
seattleopera.org/fellowtravelers

Carmen

- Music by George Bizet
- Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy
- Conducted by Ludovic Morlot
- Directed and Choreographed by Paul Curran
- May 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16, & 17, 2026
- McCaw Hall (321 Mercer St, Seattle, WA 98109)
- seattleopera.org/carmen

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.