Washington National Opera
Francesca Zambello, Artistic Director
announces its

2017–2018 SEASON

Aida
Alcina
Don Carlo
The Barber of Seville
Candide

Plus, the return of The Little Prince and the American Opera Initiative Festival, two Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist performances, special concerts, and more

Singers include Jamie Barton, Leah Crocetto, Elizabeth DeShong, Denyce Graves, Soloman Howard, Quinn Kelsey, Yonghoon Lee, Isabel Leonard, Kathryn Lewek, Angela Meade, Latonia Moore, Eric Owens, Marina Prudenskaya, Morris Robinson, Ekaterina Semenchuk, Alek Shrader, Andrea Silvestrelli, Taylor Stayton, Carl Tanner, Russell Thomas, Amber Wagner, Tamara Wilson, and Andrey Zhilikhovsky.

Conductors include WNO Music Director Philippe Auguin, Maurizio Benini, Michael Christie, Jane Glover, James Lowe, George Manahan, and Nicole Paiement

Directors include Tim Alberly, Anne Bogart, Peter Kazaras, and Francesca Zambello

(WASHINGTON)—Washington National Opera (WNO), led by Artistic Director Francesca Zambello, today announced its 2017–2018 season, one that continues its focus on bold productions of classic operas, fascinating contemporary perspectives,
and the best in American artistry. The season includes new WNO productions of Verdi’s epic drama *Aida*, the company premiere of Handel’s magical baroque opera *Alcina*, and Verdi’s towering masterpiece *Don Carlo*, plus Rossini’s delightful comedy *The Barber of Seville* and Bernstein’s biting satire *Candide*. The season also features a festival weekend of four world premieres as part of the American Opera Initiative, the return of the holiday family opera, *The Little Prince*, two special Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist performances, and other exciting vocal events.

“With each new season, WNO raises the bar of excellence and integrity that respects the company’s past but also looks to the evolving future of opera. WNO wants to be on the front of that wave, bringing together major stars and creative talents from the top echelons of opera to transport, provoke, and entertain our audiences with their voices and visions,” said Zambello. “Opera can be the launching pad to stimulate conversations about humanity—it can combat indifference, ignorance, and polarization. I hope our programming choices for the 2017–2018 season demonstrate WNO’s dedication to our role as the national opera company and our firm commitment to harnessing this unique power of our beloved art form to help us grapple with the issues of our time.”

**Washington National Opera 2017–2018 Season Schedule**

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*Aida*

WNO’s 2017–2018 season opens with Verdi’s grand Egyptian epic *Aida*, September 9–23, 2017, in the Opera House. In this majestically scaled but intimate love story, a captive Ethiopian princess must choose between her patriotic duty and her love for an enemy military hero. This bold new WNO production—co-produced with San Francisco
Opera, Seattle Opera, and Minnesota Opera—is inspired by contemporary artist RETNA, whose work uses calligraphy, hieroglyphics, and bold colors and shapes to evoke a mythic past with a contemporary edge. Directing the production is WNO Artistic Director Francesca Zambello; Michael Christie, who conducts performances of Dead Man Walking at WNO later this season, leads the WNO Orchestra in interpreting Verdi’s passionate score.

Sharing the title role are two blazing sopranos returning to the WNO stage: Tamara Wilson, the 2016 Richard Tucker Award winner last seen in 2010’s Un ballo in maschera, and Amber Wagner, the 2007 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions winner who was a fierce Leonora in The Force of Destiny in 2013. Performing as Aida’s rival Amneris are two celebrated Russian mezzo-sopranos, each making their WNO debuts: Ekaterina Semenchuk, who sang the role to great acclaim at this production’s premiere in San Francisco in 2016, and Marina Prudenskaya, who has won praise for her roles in Verdi and Wagner at many of the world’s leading opera houses. Sharing the role of the noble captain Radamès are South Korean tenor Yonghoon Lee, a star at the Metropolitan Opera in leading Verdi roles who makes both his WNO and role debuts in this production; and Carl Tanner, last seen at WNO as Captain Ahab in 2014’s Moby-Dick, and well-known for his portrayal of Radamès at the Met, Pittsburgh Opera, Opera Colorado, and Wolf Trap Opera.

Also in the cast are baritone Gordon Hawkins, who was memorable as Alberich in WNO’s Ring Cycle in 2016, as Aida’s father Amonasro; bass Morris Robinson, an unforgettable Joe in 2013’s Show Boat, as the high priest Ramfis; and former Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist and rising star bass Soloman Howard as the King of Egypt, the role of his Metropolitan Opera debut in 2014.

Alcina

WNO’s season continues with the company premiere of Handel’s most exotic opera, Alcina, November 4–19, 2017, in the Eisenhower Theater. Heightened by magic and spectacle, this romantic adventure brims with the jewel-like melodies and rhythmic energy of baroque music. Matched to the acoustics of the Kennedy Center’s more intimate Eisenhower Theater, Alcina boasts the world-class vocal talents of four of
today’s most exciting singers. Soprano Angela Meade, who stunned audiences with her WNO debut in Norma in 2013, sings the title role of the powerful sorceress for the first time. Alcina’s sister, Morgana, is the rising soprano Ying Fang in her WNO debut. Elizabeth DeShong, a mezzo-soprano who has quickly become one of the most important and sought-after singers in her repertory, sings the “trouser role” of Alcina’s enchanted lover, the knight Ruggiero. Mezzo-soprano Daniela Mack, whose international career has taken her to the most important opera houses in the world, returns to WNO as Ruggiero’s fiancée, Bradamante.

This exciting new production is WNO’s first-ever staging of Handel’s masterful baroque opera and is directed by gifted theater and opera director Anne Bogart, who directed WNO’s powerful Norma in 2013. Conducting the WNO Orchestra is noted Handel specialist Jane Glover in her WNO debut.

A special Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance of Alcina is presented in the Eisenhower Theater on Saturday, November 18, 2017, and features current singers and alumni of WNO’s Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program. Complete casting for this performance will be announced in the coming months.

The Little Prince
Continuing its tradition of producing a family opera during the holiday season, WNO presents a revival of its beloved production of The Little Prince, December 14–17, 2017, in the Terrace Theater. Featuring a score by Academy Award® winner Rachel Portman (Emma), an English-language libretto by playwright Nicholas Wright (His Dark Materials), and direction by WNO Artistic Director Francesca Zambello, this family-friendly opera is based on the beloved children’s book by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The cast includes members of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program and also features the return of the WNO Children’s Chorus. The WNO Orchestra is led by opera and musical theater conductor James Lowe in his WNO debut.

American Opera Initiative Festival
To celebrate the sixth season of the American Opera Initiative, WNO’s comprehensive commissioning program to stimulate, enrich, and ensure the future of contemporary
American opera, WNO once again hosts an American Opera Initiative Festival weekend featuring all four world premieres in the season’s program, January 19–21, 2018, in the Terrace Theater.


The popular Three 20-Minute Operas, featuring the work of three new composer-librettist teams, will be presented at two performances on January 20, 2018, with the WNO Orchestra conducted by George Manahan, the music director of Portland Opera who will also conduct Champion at WNO in March 2017. Manahan will serve as one of three mentors to the program, alongside the Pulitzer Prize–winning team behind the opera Silent Night—composer Kevin Puts and librettist Mark Campbell. More information on the three composer-librettist teams selected for the 20-Minute Operas will be announced in the coming months.

Don Carlo

Verdi’s grand opera of passion and political intrigue, Don Carlo returns to the Opera House for the first time in nearly 20 years, March 3–17, 2018. Set at the time of the Spanish Inquisition, and based on historical characters and events, Don Carlo features some of Verdi’s most beautiful music weaved together with a story of personal, political, and theological conflicts. As the New York Times notes, “Every production of this profound and challenging work is a major venture for an opera company.”

This new co-production with Opera Philadelphia and Minnesota Opera offers a powerhouse cast with some of the biggest stars in all of opera. Soprano Leah Crocetto, who was riveting in her WNO debut as Madame Lidoine in 2015’s Dialogues
of the Carmelites, returns to take on the role of Elisabeth of Valois, the heart of opera’s epic love triangle. She is joined by mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton, who was a striking Waltraute and Second Norn in 2016’s Ring Cycle, singing the role of the fiery Princess Eboli. King Philip II is sung by bass-baritone Eric Owens, who starred at WNO in 2016’s Lost in the Stars and 2015’s The Flying Dutchman. Tenor Russell Thomas makes his WNO debut as Don Carlo, having recently sung the title role for the first time at Deutsche Oper Berlin to great acclaim. Also making his WNO debut is Quinn Kelsey, one of the leading Verdi baritones of today, as the trusted Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa. Rounding out the cast as the Grand Inquisitor is bass Andrea Silvestrelli, last seen at WNO as Sparafucile in Rigoletto in 2008.

At the performance on March 16, 2018, an alternate cast takes the stage, featuring Latonia Moore as Elisabeth of Valois in her WNO debut, Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Daryl Freedman as Princess Eboli, Rafael Davila as Don Carlo, Troy Crook as Rodrigo, and Peter Volpe as King Philip II.

Celebrated British director Tim Albery, who has staged numerous productions for the Metropolitan Opera, the Royal Opera House, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, directs this new production, with WNO Music Director Philippe Auguin conducting the WNO Orchestra.

The Barber of Seville
Shaving, swooning, and scheming abound in Rossini’s charming romantic comedy, The Barber of Seville, April 28–May 19, 2018 in the Opera House. One of the most popular operas of all time, this rapid-fire romp is a prequel of sorts to Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro, seen at WNO in 2016 (both are based on a series of plays by the French writer Beaumarchais). The opera is also known for its instantly recognizable overture, made even more famous by its use in the iconic Bugs Bunny cartoon Rabbit of Seville. This WNO production, last seen in 2009, is directed by Peter Kazaras (2014’s La bohème and 2016’s The Marriage of Figaro) and is conducted by renowned Italian conductor Maurizio Benini in his WNO debut.
Rosina, the object of everyone’s affection, is sung by the beloved Isabel Leonard, the star of WNO’s Cinderella in 2015. Tenor Taylor Stayton makes his WNO debut as Count Almaviva, a role he has sung to great acclaim at the Metropolitan Opera, the Glyndebourne Festival, and the BBC Proms. Making his American debut as the titular barber Figaro is Russian baritone Andrey Zhilikhovsky, a core performer at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre who has been acclaimed the world over. Two alumni of WNO’s Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program take on featured roles in the opera: bass Valeriano Lanchas is Dr. Bartolo, while bass Wei Wu is Don Basilio.

A special Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance of The Barber of Seville is presented in the Opera House on Thursday, May 17, 2018, and features current singers and alumni of WNO’s Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program. Complete casting for this performance will be announced in the coming months.

_Candide_
WNO’s 2017–2018 season concludes with the company premiere of Leonard Bernstein’s rollicking, piercing satire _Candide_, May 5–26, 2018, in the Opera House. Based on Voltaire’s novella and featuring such classic tunes as “Glitter and Be Gay,” “The Best of All Possible Worlds,” and “Make Our Garden Grow,” _Candide_ is one of Bernstein’s most popular and enduring works, and is WNO’s contribution to the Kennedy Center’s Leonard Bernstein at 100 celebration. This new-to-Washington production, from The Glimmerglass Festival, is directed by WNO Artistic Director Francesca Zambello and conducted by Nicole Paiement, who most recently conducted the world premiere of WNO’s _The Dictator’s Wife_ in January 2017.

Heading the cast are American tenor Alek Shrader, the breakout star of the 2009 opera documentary _The Audition_, in his WNO debut in the title role; Kathryn Lewek, whose impeccable high notes mesmerized WNO audiences as the Queen of the Night in 2014’s _The Magic Flute_, as Cunegonde; and WNO audience favorite and local legend Denyce Graves as The Old Lady.
Other Special Vocal Events of the 2017–2018 Season

Named for the groundbreaking African American contralto, the Marian Anderson Vocal Award recognizes a young American singer with outstanding promise for a significant career. In addition to a cash prize and an educational residency at Washington’s Duke Ellington School of the Arts, the winner performs in a recital co-presented by WNO and the Kennedy Center’s Fortas Chamber Music Concerts. This year’s recipient is gifted countertenor John Holiday. In this intimate recital, co-produced by the Center’s Fortas Chamber Music Concerts on Thursday, February 15, 2018 in the Terrace Theater, Holiday will showcase the vocal artistry that won him this prestigious prize.

The National Symphony Orchestra and its new Music Director Gianandrea Noseda will present several programs highlighting vocal music during the 2017–2018 season. Contemporary music icon John Adams’s The Gospel According to the Other Mary will be presented at the Kennedy Center for the first time in performances conducted by Noseda in the Concert Hall on Thursday, March 8 and Saturday, March 10, 2018. This oratorio, which was a finalist for the 2014 Pulitzer Prize in Music, focuses on the final few weeks of the life of Jesus, including his passion, from the point of view of “the other Mary,” Mary Magdalene, as well as her sister Martha and brother Lazarus. Vocalists include mezzo-sopranos Kelley O’Connor and Tamara Mumford, tenor Zach Borichevsky, countertenors Daniel Bubeck, Brian Cummings, and Nathan Medley, and the University of Maryland Concert Choir led by director Edward Macary.


Maestro Noseda also leads the NSO in a one-night-only performance in the Concert Hall starring Russian baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky in Shostakovich’s Suite on Verses of Michelangelo Buonarroti. The concert on Saturday, April 14, 2018, is part of SHIFT: A Festival of American Orchestras, co-presented by Washington Performing Arts.
The Kennedy Center’s Fortas Chamber Music Concerts series also includes several notable vocal events, presented in the intimate and newly renovated Terrace Theater. **Cantus**, the acclaimed all-male vocal ensemble known worldwide for its trademark warmth and blend of music ranging from Renaissance to the 21st century, performs a holiday program on Wednesday, December 6, 2017. **Leonard Bernstein, His World Through Music**, part of the Kennedy Center’s *Leonard Bernstein at 100* celebration, featuring mezzo-soprano Carla Dirlikov Canales in collaboration with pianist Justin Snyder and Leonard Bernstein’s son Alexander as narrator, is presented on Tuesday, February 6, 2018. **Dawn Upshaw and Sō Percussion** take the stage on Wednesday, April 5, 2018, for a program that includes a new commission from Pulitzer Prize–winning composer Caroline Shaw. The concert is co-presented by Mason Bates’s *KC Jukebox*. Taking a break from her rehearsals for WNO’s *The Barber of Seville*, **Isabel Leonard** offers a new recital program on Sunday, April 15, 2018.

**Explore the Arts Events Go Behind the Scenes of Creating Opera**

Patrons can engage with the arts on a deeper level with these special opportunities from the Kennedy Center’s Education Division. In *The Making of Aida* on Thursday, September 7, 2017, WNO Artistic Director Francesca Zambello and other creative team members discuss bringing this new WNO production to the stage. Ticket holders can stay to observe the orchestra tech rehearsal later that evening. In *Creating an Opera: Proving Up* on Monday, January 8, 2018, composer Missy Mazzoli and librettist Royce Vavrek discuss the years-long process of writing their new opera. And in *Exploring Don Carlo* on Tuesday, February 6, 2018, WNO Music Director Philippe Auguin takes patrons into the music to deepen their knowledge of Verdi’s mighty creation.

New this season is a series of master classes featuring luminaries of the opera world leading WNO’s Domingo-Cafritz Young Artists in honing their craft. **Peter Kazaras**, the renowned director of 2016’s *The Marriage of Figaro* and the upcoming *The Barber of Seville*, is also one of this season’s Artists-in-Residence for the Young Artists. He leads the class on Thursday, September 14, 2017. WNO Artistic Director **Francesca Zambello** leads the class on Thursday, November 2, 2017, accompanied by **Robert Ainsley**, director of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program. Acclaimed bass-baritone **Eric Owens**, star of 2016’s *Lost in the Stars* and this season’s *Don Carlo*, also
serves as one of the Artists-in-Residence for the Young Artists. He leads the master class on Thursday, March 15, 2018.

**Free Education Events and Performances Round Out the Season**

Prior to every performance of *Aida, Alcina, Don Carlo, The Barber of Seville*, and *Candide*, WNO presents free Opera Insights events to take audiences inside the composer’s mind, behind the scenes of planning a production, and into the history and social context of each opera. These lectures are free, but patrons must present a ticket from any performance of the production that is being discussed in the lecture. Most Opera Insights begin one hour before the performance and last 20–25 minutes. Musicologist Saul Lilienstein’s Opera Insights begin one hour and 15 minutes before the performance and last 35–40 minutes. Speakers, dates, and start times will be posted on the WNO website.

Following select performances, ticketholders can engage directly with WNO artists and creative teams in post-performance talkbacks, hosted by WNO artistic team members. All discussions begin immediately after the performance and are free with a ticket from any performance of the production that is being discussed.

*Aida*: Sunday, September 10; Sunday, September 17; and Monday, September 18, 2017  
*Alcina*: Monday, November 6 and Friday, November 17, 2017  
**AOI Festival: Three 20-Minute Operas**: Saturday, January 20, 2018  
(9 p.m. performance only)  
**AOI Festival: Proving Up**: Sunday, January 21, 2018  
*Don Carlo*: Monday, March 5 and Sunday, March 11, 2018  
*The Barber of Seville*: Monday, May 7 and Sunday, May 13, 2018  
*Candide*: Monday, May 14 and Sunday, May 20, 2018

Patrons can also enjoy free preview performances and discussions of the season’s operas along with recitals featuring the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artists on the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage. The previews are designed to enhance the upcoming opera experience with dynamic speakers providing insightful introductions—including historical context, synopses, and more—while the Young Artists perform excerpts from select scenes and arias. The recitals will feature a wide range of repertory.
Fall 2017 Season Preview: Friday, September 8, 2017
Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Recital: Thursday, October 12, 2017
Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Recital: Tuesday, January 30, 2018
Spring 2018 Season Preview: Thursday, February 8, 2018
Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Recital: Thursday, March 22, 2018
2018–2019 Season Preview: Monday, May 21, 2018

TICKET INFORMATION
Subscription renewals and new subscriptions to WNO’s 2017–2018 season are available now. To purchase a subscription, patrons should call the Subscription Office at (202) 416-8500 or go to www.kennedy-center.org/subscribe. Subscriptions may be purchased in advance of general on-sale dates, which will be announced soon. Groups of 20 or more may contact the Kennedy Center Group Sales office at (202) 416-8400.

Artists and performances are subject to change
The 2017-2018 Season

Aida

Music by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni

September 9–23, 2017

The timeless conflict of duty versus desire rises like a pyramid in Verdi’s towering, impassioned epic. Aida, a young woman enslaved by the Egyptians, harbors secret feelings for military hero Radamès. Unbeknownst to her captors, she’s also an Ethiopian princess and daughter of their sworn enemy. Torn between love and loyalty to her people, Aida must make an impossible choice—all as the King of Egypt’s own daughter Amneris desperately seeks Radamès’s affections for herself.

WNO launches its 2017–2018 season with this dazzling new production, marking the first time Aida has been staged in the Opera House in more than 25 years. The striking sets and costumes are inspired by visionary artist RETNA, whose vibrant hieroglyphics and calligraphy lend the classic story a unique modern edge. Spirited dance and the breathtaking acrobatics of parkour draw audiences even further into this mythic world. But it is Verdi’s expressive music that makes Aida a love triangle for the ages.

New WNO Co-production with San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, and Minnesota Opera
In Italian with projected English titles
Kennedy Center Opera House

Saturday, September 9, 2017 at 7 p.m.
Sunday, September 10, 2017 at 2 p.m.
Wednesday, September 13, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, September 15, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, September 16, 2017 at 7 p.m.
Sunday, September 17, 2017 at 2 p.m.
Monday, September 18, 2017 at 7 p.m.
Thursday, September 21, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, September 23, 2017 at 7 p.m.

Aida: Tamara Wilson (September 9, 13, 16, 18, 21 & 23)
Amneris: Ekaterina Semenchuk (September 9, 13, 16, 18 & 23)
Marina Prudenskaya† (September 10, 15, 17 & 21)
Radamès: Yonghoon Lee* (September 9, 13, 16, 18, 21 & 23)
Carl Tanner (September 10, 15 & 17)

Amonasro: Gordon Hawkins
Ramfis: Morris Robinson
The King: Solomon Howard ±

Director: Francesca Zambello
Conductor: Michael Christie
Original Concept Design: RETNA*
Associate Director: E. Loren Meeker

Set Designer: Michael Yeargan
Costume Designer: Anita Yavich
Lighting Designer: Mark McCullough
Choreographer: Jessica Lang†

* Washington National Opera debut
± Alumnus of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program
Alcina

Music by George Frideric Handel
Libretto by Riccardo Broschi

November 4–19, 2017

Welcome to the island of illusions. Peer beyond the palms to discover the beautiful Alcina, a skilled sorceress in the art of seduction. Her passion burns red hot—until she tires of her conquests and turns them into wild beasts or stone. When dashing knight Ruggiero succumbs to this femme fatale’s dangerous charms, his fiancée Bradamante takes on a daring disguise to free her betrothed and break the curse. But is Alcina finally falling for the man of her dreams? In this cruel paradise, can anyone tell what’s real?

This exciting new WNO production is the company’s first-ever staging of Handel’s masterful baroque opera, crafted at the pinnacle of his creativity in the era of Ariodante and Messiah. Matched to the intimate acoustics of the Eisenhower Theater, Alcina harkens to the magnificent tradition of grand Handelian singing, with world-class vocal talents impeccably suited to every sumptuous role.

New WNO Production
In Italian with projected English titles
Kennedy Center Eisenhower Theater

Saturday, November 4, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Monday, November 6, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, November 8, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, November 11, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, November 17, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, November 18, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.,†
Sunday, November 19, 2017 at 2 p.m.

Alcina: Angela Meade
Morgana: Ying Fang
Ruggiero: Elizabeth DeShong
Bradamante: Daniela Mack

Director: Anne Bogart
Conductor: Jane Glover
Set Designer: Neil Patel
Costume Designer: James Schuette
Lighting Designer: Christopher Akerlind
Choreographer: Barney O’Hanlon

† Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance, casting to be announced
* Washington National Opera debut
The Little Prince

Music by Rachel Portman
Libretto by Nicholas Wright

December 14–17, 2017

All the joy and wonder of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s classic illustrated storybook comes back to WNO in this highly anticipated revival in the newly renovated Terrace Theater.

On his tiny home planet, a young boy spends his days protecting his only friend, a rose, from miniature volcanoes and ravenous baobab trees. When loneliness sets in, he begins a mystical quest across the cosmos to find new companionship. During his journey, he encounters several other intergalactic inhabitants—among them a delusional king, a rich businessman, and a wearied lamplighter—before meeting a pilot on Earth who has crash-landed in the Sahara. The two become unlikely friends, learning lessons from the desert’s many creatures until the prince realizes just how special his rose really is.

Featuring a tuneful score by prolific film composer Rachel Portman—an Academy Award® winner for Emma and nominee for The Cider House Rules and Chocolat—The Little Prince continues WNO’s tradition of presenting a family opera at the holidays while showcasing the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artists alongside the WNO Children’s Chorus.

WNO Production
In English with projected English titles
Kennedy Center Terrace Theater

Thursday, December 14, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, December 15, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, December 16, 2017 at 2 p.m.
Saturday, December 16, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 17, 2017 at 2 p.m.

Director: Francesca Zambello
Conductor: James Lowe
Original Set and Costume Designer: Maria Björnson
Lighting Designer: Mark McCullough
Additional Set Design: Paul Taylor
Associate Costume Designer: Sue Willmington
Choreographer: Eric Sean Fogel

* Washington National Opera debut
American Opera Initiative Festival

January 19–21, 2018

WNO’s acclaimed commissioning program for contemporary American opera enters its sixth exciting season with four more world premiere presentations across a single weekend, featuring Domingo-Cafritz Young Artists and other talented performers.

Proving Up
Music by Missy Mazzoli
Libretto by Royce Vavrek

On the heels of their enormous success with the world premiere of Breaking the Waves at Opera Philadelphia in 2016, composer Missy Mazzoli and librettist Royce Vavrek reunite to create a captivating tale of homesteading in the American West. In Proving Up, based on a coming-of-age short story by Karen Russell, a group of Nebraska families struggle to claim their land under the Homestead Act. In order to satisfy the grant, or “prove up,” their homes must each have at least one glass window. Unable to afford such a luxury, the families recruit young Miles to ferry a single window from one home to the next, each time the inspector arrives. How will Miles handle this enormous responsibility, knowing so many depend on his help to achieve the American Dream?

World Premiere
Friday, January 19, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, January 21, 2018 at 2 p.m.

Kennedy Center Terrace Theater

Three 20-Minute Operas

Three new 20-minute operas will be staged in a concert performance, accompanied by a small chamber orchestra and followed by a Q&A with the artists and creative team. This season’s distinguished mentors include the 2012 Pulitzer Prize-winning team from the opera Silent Night—composer Kevin Puts (The Manchurian Candidate) and librettist Mark Campbell (Approaching Ali, which the American Opera Initiative premiered in 2013)—and conductor George Manahan, the music director of Portland Opera who will also conduct WNO’s production of Champion in March 2017.

World Premieres
Saturday, January 20, 2018 at 7 p.m.
Saturday, January 20, 2018 at 9 p.m.

Kennedy Center Terrace Theater

* Washington National Opera debut
**Don Carlo**

Music by Giuseppe Verdi  
Libretto by Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle

March 3–17, 2018

Family ties fray and unravel in Verdi’s spectacle of forbidden passion, political intrigue, and shattering betrayal set at the height of the Spanish Empire. Don Carlo, the King of Spain’s son, laments that Elisabeth of Valois, the woman he loves, has been forced to marry his father to forge peace with France. With everyone under the watchful eye of the Grand Inquisitor, tension and paranoia run rampant, leading the king to suspect his wife of infidelity with Carlo. What follows is a fierce struggle between father and son, allegiance and devotion, honor and the heart, with no easy answers—or easy way out.

Nearly 20 years have passed since WNO last staged this grand masterpiece in four acts, and now a solid-gold cast heralds its return in this stunning new production. Among the highlights: an auto-da-fe that propels the public execution of Spain’s “heretics” to chilling new heights, and a shocking finale guaranteed to challenge the imagination. At once an emotional portrait of a family faced with mounting moral crises, and an epic exploration of the burden and pitfalls of power, the penetrating drama of *Don Carlo* will be impossible to forget.

New WNO Co-production with  
Opera Philadelphia and Minnesota Opera

In Italian with projected English titles

Kennedy Center Opera House

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<th>Performance</th>
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<td>March 3, 2018</td>
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<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>March 17, 2018</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
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Elisabeth of Valois: **Leah Crocetto** / **Latonia Moore**¥  
Princess Eboli: **Jamie Barton** / **Daryl Freedman** ‡¥  
Don Carlo: **Russell Thomas** / **Rafael Davila** ¥  
Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa: **Quinn Kelsey** / **Troy Cook** ¥  
Philip II, King of Spain: **Eric Owens** / **Peter Volpe** ¥  
The Grand Inquisitor: **Andrea Silvestrelli**

**Director:** **Tim Albery**  
**Conductor:** **Philippe Auguin**  
**Set Designer:** **Andrew Lieberman**  
**Costume Designer:** **Constance Hoffman**  
**Lighting Designer:** **Thomas Hase**

¥ Friday, March 16, 2018 performance only  
‡ Current member of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program
The Barber of Seville
(Il barbiere di Siviglia)

Music by Gioachino Rossini
Libretto by Cesare Sterbini

April 28–May 19, 2018

“Figaro! Figaro!” Indeed, demand is at an all-time high for the sharp-scissored and equally sharp-witted barber of Seville. Chief among the clamoring masses is Count Almaviva, who begs his friend to help him woo the beautiful young Rosina. The catch? A bumbling, older doctor has claimed her first. Pulling from a bottomless bag of tricks and disguises, this scheming duo stops at nothing—breaking and entering, shaving distractions, even good old-fashioned bribery—to turn the tables in the name of true love.

A stellar cast joins this revival of our own production of Rossini’s delightful comedy, one of the most beloved opera masterpieces of all time. Last staged by WNO in 2009, The Barber of Seville boasts uproarious laughs and sensational music in equal measure with its sparkling melodies, high-flying vocal fireworks, and tour-de-force showstoppers—including the iconic and notoriously challenging baritone aria “Largo al factotum” as well as Rosina’s classic “Una voce poco fa.”

WNO Production
In Italian with projected English titles
Kennedy Center Opera House

Rosina: Isabel Leonard
Count Almaviva: Taylor Stayton
Figaro: Andrey Zhilikhovsky
Dr. Bartolo: Valeriano Lanchas ±
Don Basilio:Wei Wu ±

Director: Peter Kazaras
Conductor: Maurizio Benini
Set Designer: Allen Moyer
Costume Designer: James Scott
Lighting Designer: Mark McCullough

† Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance, casting to be announced
* Washington National Opera debut
± Alumnus of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program
Candide

Music by Leonard Bernstein
Book Adapted from Voltaire by Hugh Wheeler in a New Version by John Caird
Lyrics by Richard Wilbur with Additional Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, John Latouche, Lillian Hellman, Dorothy Parker, and Leonard Bernstein

May 5-26, 2018

Embrace a sunny outlook and everything will be OK, right? Not so in Leonard Bernstein’s funny, philosophical, and fast-paced take on Voltaire’s crisp satire, which annihilates any notions of hope with its dizzying display of human depravity and catastrophic disasters. When young Candide’s marriage proposal to a baron’s daughter doesn’t quite go as planned, this naïve student of optimism is thrust into an eye-opening odyssey across lands near and far, discovering the horrors of existence at every turn.

War! Earthquakes! Slavery! Disease! Very bad things happen to very good people (and plenty of bad ones, too) as a terrific ensemble cast quick-changes its way through dozens of colorful characters, performing a witty and effervescent score that includes such classic tunes as “The Best of All Possible Worlds,” “Make Our Garden Grow,” and “Glitter and Be Gay.” Through all of its hysterical scouring of 18th-century wickedness and woe, WNO’s first-ever production of Candide still finds a way to move and inspire with life-affirming lessons that, surprisingly, ring just as true today.

Production from The Glimmerglass Festival
In English with projected English titles
Part of the Kennedy Center
Leonard Bernstein at 100 celebration
Kennedy Center Opera House

Candide: Alek Shrader
Cunegonde: Kathryn Lewek
The Old Lady: Denyce Graves

Director: Francesca Zambello
Conductor: Nicole Paiement
Associate Director and Choreographer: Eric Sean Fogel
Set Designer: James Noone
Costume Designer: Jennifer Moeller
Lighting Designer: Mark McCullough

* Washington National Opera debut
ABOUT WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

Washington National Opera (WNO) is one of the leading opera companies in the United States. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Francesca Zambello, the company presents a diverse season of grand opera—including both classics from the repertory and more contemporary pieces—plus several newly commissioned American works and a variety of special concerts and events. The WNO Orchestra is led by Music Director Philippe Auguin. Founded in 1956 and an affiliate of the Kennedy Center since 2011, WNO has a storied legacy of world premieres, new productions, international tours, live recordings and radio broadcasts, and innovative education and community-engagement programs. Throughout its history, WNO has been led by titans in the opera field, including the legendary Plácido Domingo, who headed the company from 1996 to 2011.

WNO contributes to the future of opera through two signature artist-development programs. The Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, now in its 15th season, has become one of the nation’s most competitive and comprehensive professional training programs for young singers and collaborative pianists. Alumni of the program have won major competitions and gone on to successful careers at major opera houses in the U.S. and abroad. The WNO Opera Institute nurtures the ambitions of high-school-age singers from across the nation during an intensive three-week summer program held at American University in Washington.

Among the company’s most successful recent programs is the 2012 launch of the American Opera Initiative, a comprehensive commissioning program that works to expand the American operatic repertory, to give WNO’s young artists the chance to collaborate with living composers and librettists on new works, and to make American opera more relevant to 21st-century audiences. The most popular of WNO’s community-engagement programs is M&M’S® Opera in the Outfield, during which an opera is broadcast live from the Kennedy Center Opera House stage to the high-definition scoreboard at Nationals Park. The company’s other education programs include the Kids Create Opera program at local elementary schools, Look-In performances for students in grades 4–8, and the Student Dress Rehearsal Program for middle and high school students. The company also offers free Opera Insights programs before every performance in the Opera House.

To celebrate the company’s 60th anniversary during its 2015–2016 season, Washington National Opera presented three complete cycles of Wagner’s Ring in spring 2016. These performances, featuring an acclaimed production by Artistic Director Francesca Zambello and conducted by Music Director Philippe Auguin, marked the first time the company presented The Ring in complete cycles in its history.

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#WNO1718
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TICKETS & INFORMATION
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