



Washington National Opera
The Kennedy Center

Timothy O'Leary
General Director

Francesca Zambello
Artistic Director

Press Release

February 11, 2019

Washington National Opera presents

Faust

Charles Gounod's most famous work, based on Goethe's German legend, returns to WNO after more than two decades

In his WNO debut, Argentine tenor Marcelo Puente makes a deal with the devil to seduce Canadian soprano Erin Wall

**March 16–30, 2019
in the Kennedy Center Opera House**

(WASHINGTON)—A man who sells his soul for worldly gain finds a perfect home in the Beltway as Washington National Opera stages Charles Gounod's 1859 opera ***Faust***, performed in French with projected English titles. After a 25-year absence from its stage, WNO resurrects the French classic filled with depression, damnation, and demons in the Kennedy Center Opera House. Immortalized by Goethe's dramatic work, Gounod set the legendary German tale of Faust to music with libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré. The opera follows the aging Dr. Faust who is willing to exchange Heaven's rewards for Earth's mortal pleasures. After a pact with Méphistophélès that restores his youth, Faust pursues the lovely Marguerite only to learn his salvation is tragically bound to others, especially for those he loves most. In the tradition of grand French opera and featuring a storybook aesthetic and memorable music, including Marguerite's "Jewel Song," the Soldiers' Chorus and the final trio, *Faust* returns for six performances, March 16–30, 2019, with tickets starting at \$45.

Performing on stages across Europe including Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and Deutsche Oper Berlin, Lirico-spinto tenor **[Marcelo Puente](#)** makes his WNO debut in title role of Faust. Performing as the tragic heroine, Marguerite, is soprano **[Erin Wall](#)**, who made her WNO debut as *Don Giovanni*'s Donna Anna in 2007 after which *Opera News* noted, "Sure coloratura and

~ more ~

incisive phrasing (including hairpin shifts of dynamics) completed the impressive vocal package.”

Two stars return to WNO, American bass [Raymond Aceto](#), who local audiences first saw in 2016’s *Ring* Cycle, schemes in the devilish role of Méphistophélès and Canadian baritone [Joshua Hopkins](#) performs the role of Marguerite’s doomed brother Valentin; Hopkins was Papageno in 2014’s *The Magic Flute*. Rounding out the cast includes current Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Samson McCrady as Wagner and former Young Artists Allegra De Vita as Siébel and Deborah Nansteel as Dame Marthe.

Bringing the musical score to life is conductor [Keri-Lynn Wilson](#), who last conducted the WNO Orchestra in 2009’s *Turandot*. This production also marks the return of [Garnett Bruce](#) but in his directorial debut for the WNO; Garnett was the associate director for *The Magic Flute* in which Joshua Hopkins starred.

The creative team for *Faust* features set and costume designer Earl Staley (WNO debut) and lighting designer Michael Clark (WNO debut); the original lighting designer was Ken Billington. This production originated at Houston Grand Opera.

The opera’s running time is approximately three hours and 24 minutes, plus two 25-minute intermissions, and runs for six performances. Visit WNO’s [website](#) for more information.

Washington National Opera’s 2018–2019 season continues with Puccini’s towering masterpiece *Tosca* (May 11-25, 2019), a special Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist performance *A Concert of Comic Masterpieces* (May 24, 2019), and other exciting vocal events. [Tickets](#) are available now.

***Faust* Performance and Ticket Information**

Saturday, March 16 at 7 p.m. ▪ Monday, March 18 at 7 p.m.
Friday, March 22 at 7:30 p.m. ▪ Sunday, March 24 at 2 p.m.
Wednesday, March 27 at 7:30 p.m. ▪ Saturday, March 30 at 7 p.m.

Ticket Information

Tickets start at \$45 and are available [online](#), in person at the Kennedy Center Box Office, and by calling (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324. Groups of 10 or more receive discounts up to 15% for *Faust* purchases by calling (202) 467-8400. For all other ticket-related customer service inquiries, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540.

Patrons 30 and under and active-duty members of the military are invited to join the Kennedy Center's *MyTix* program for special discount offers and chances to win free tickets. *MyTix* discounts will be available for select performance of *Faust*. For more information, visit kennedy-center.org/mytix

Faust Production Information

Music by Charles Gounod / Libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré,
based on Goethe's *Faust: Part One*
In French with projected English titles.

Production originated at Houston Grand Opera.

March 16, 18, 22, 24m, 27, and 30

Cast and Creative Team

(Cast in order of vocal appearance)

Faust	Marcelo Puente *	Conductor	Keri-Lynn Wilson
Méphistophélès	Raymond Aceto	Director	Garnett Bruce
Wagner	Samson McCrady ‡	Set and Costume Designer	Earl Staley *
Valentin	Joshua Hopkins	Original Lighting Designer	Ken Billington
Siébel	Allegra De Vita ±	Lighting Designer	Michael Clark *
Marguerite	Erin Wall	Stage Manager	Laura R. Krause

* Washington National Opera Debut

± Alumnus of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program

‡ Current member of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program

Faust Related Programs and Events

Opera Insights before every performance, Kennedy Center Opera House

WNO presents a free pre-performance education event prior to every performance of *Faust*. These events begin one hour prior to curtain in the Opera House and last approximately 20–25 minutes. Musicologist Saul Lilienstein's Opera Insights on Monday, March 18, begins at 5:45 p.m. and lasts approximately 35–40 minutes.

Musical Preview of *Faust* and *Eugene Onegin*

Wednesday, March 6, 2019 at 6 p.m., Kennedy Center Millennium Stage

Enjoy a free preview of musical highlights from two of opera's grandest works: Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and Gounod's *Faust*, running concurrently this March. This special program features the vocal talents of WNO's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program performing each opera's most famous works.

Guided Rehearsal: *Faust*

Friday, March 8, 2019 at 7 p.m., Kennedy Center Opera House

Explore the Arts. Audience members get a behind-the-scenes glimpse of a world-class opera production through this unique open rehearsal experience. Using audio headsets, attendees can learn more about the production via expert commentary while watching a rehearsal with piano and the professional cast. Visit the WNO website for ticket information.

Artist Q&As: *Faust*

Monday, March 18, and Sunday, March 24, post-performance, Kennedy Center Opera House

Following the performances on Monday, March 18 and Sunday, March 24 in the Kennedy Center Opera House, please join WNO artistic staff for a wide-ranging discussion with the artists for an inside scoop on the production. These events are free to patrons presenting a *Faust* ticket and begin immediately after the performance.

“Touch Cart” and Audience Experience

Friday, March 22, and Wednesday, March 27, pre-performance, Kennedy Center Grand Foyer

WNO’s Touch Cart will be open one hour prior to the performances on Friday, March 22 and Wednesday, March 27 to experience first-hand real props and costume items featured in the opera. WNO’s Education Department invites patrons to come early to touch and explore items from the production.

WNO Young Associates Program

The 2018-2019 WNO Young Associates Program will center on the production of *Faust*. This program is open to high school students in the greater Washington, D.C. area who are interested in exploring the professional world of opera. Whether pursuing an interest in performing onstage or in the orchestra; designing sets, costumes, or lighting; working behind the scenes; bringing the production and audiences together through public relations and marketing; using art for social change; the program mentors students on the various aspects that go into making opera and related art forms happen.

ABOUT WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

Washington National Opera (WNO) is one of the leading opera companies in the United States. Under the leadership of General Director Timothy O’Leary and world-renowned Artistic Director Francesca Zambello, the company presents a diverse repertory of grand opera across three main venues of the Kennedy Center. From classic operas to more contemporary pieces each season, WNO’s artistic output also includes several commissioned American works and a variety of special concerts, youth operas, and events.

Recent celebrated productions have included the world premiere of Philip Glass’s reconceived *Appomattox*, presented in conjunction with cultural events throughout Washington, D.C.; the powerful performances of Kurt Weill’s *Lost in the Stars*; and the massive feat of WNO’s first-complete *Ring* cycle, which was helmed by Zambello and played to sold-out houses following international acclaim.

Founded in 1956 and an artistic affiliate of the Kennedy Center since 2011, WNO has a storied legacy of more than 100 new productions, plus world premieres, international tours, live recordings and radio broadcasts, as well as 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 for 15 years, as well as luminaries such as Music Director Heinz Fricke and Director of Artistic Operations Christina Scheppelmann.

Among the company’s most successful programs is the American Opera Initiative (AOI), a commissioning program that develops new one-act works for WNO’s annual festival. By mentoring emerging composers and librettists, the Initiative works to expand the American operatic repertory and enhance its relevance to our time. Since its inception, AOI has commissioned 28 chamber opera world premieres, with some going on to future productions around the country.

With a commitment toward youth, WNO contributes to the future of opera through two signature artist-development programs. The Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, now in its 17th season, is one of the nation’s most competitive professional training programs, providing two years of intensive study to a highly selective cadre of young singers and collaborative pianists. Alumni of the program have won major competitions and gone on to successful careers at major opera houses worldwide. 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.

The most popular of WNO's community-engagement programs is *Opera in the Outfield*®, a free Kennedy Center Opera House production broadcast on 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 3–8, 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.

Discover [Washington National Opera](#) on social media:



#FaustDC

FUNDING CREDITS

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TICKETS & INFORMATION

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