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PETER KAZARAS DIRECTOR

Peter Kazaras, served as the inaugural director of Opera UCLA from 2007 to 2024 and as the inaugural Susan G. and Mitchel D. Covel, M.D., chair at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music from 2016 to 2021. A stage director, teacher, and librettist, he was also artistic director of the Seattle Opera Young Artists Program from 2006 to 2013.

In his career as a performer, Kazaras received worldwide acclaim as an operatic tenor, performing at the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, and Weiner Staatsoper, to name a few. He premiered several new works, including ***The Ghosts of Versailles*** at the Metropolitan Opera, ***A Quiet Place*** and ***New Year*** at Houston Grand Opera, and ***Thérèse Raquin*** at The Dallas Opera, Opéra de Montréal, and San Diego Opera.



Last season, Mr. Kazaras returned to the stage as Mr. Maraczek in ***She Loves Me*** at Opera Saratoga as well as The Duke in Long Beach Opera's production of ***Library of Maps: An Opera in Many Parts***. This season, he will return to Washington National Opera to direct ***Le nozze di Figaro*** before making his débuts at Palm Beach Opera for ***La bohème*** and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music for ***Cendrillon***.

Over the past 25 years, Kazaras has also worked with great success as a stage director. His recent productions include ***The Thieving Magpie*** and the world première of a revised version of ***An American Tragedy*** at The Glimmerglass Festival; ***Samson and Delilah***, ***La bohème***, ***Le nozze di Figaro***, and ***Il barbiere di Siviglia*** at Washington National Opera; and additional productions of ***La bohème*** at The Dallas Opera and Los Angeles Opera. In 2018, he scored a triumph with a new production of Korngold's first opera, ***Der Ring des Polykrates***, at The Dallas Opera. In 2022, he directed a new production of ***The Rake's Progress*** and produced a chamber version of ***L'elisir d'amore*** directed by James Darrah. He also produced chamber productions of ***Acis and Galatea*** and ***Dido and Aeneas***, directed by Crystal Manich and James Darrah, respectively.

For his direction of ***Le nozze di Figaro*** at Seattle Opera in May of 2022, Broadway World wrote, "Kazaras made the most of the ingenious opera's comedic opportunities throughout the evening and captured the Rossini-like chaos and confusion of the act-ending ensembles with aplomb. As always, Kazaras excelled in the small touches that came off as waggish and witty yet subtle..."

In addition to his work at UCLA, where he produced the world première of ***Lost Childhood*** and ***Juana***, Mr. Kazaras recently directed ***Eugene Onegin*** with Music Academy of the West; ***Turn of the Screw***, ***The Consul*** and the world première of ***An American Dream*** for Seattle Opera; ***The Ghost of Versailles*** with Chautauqua Opera; Bernstein's ***A Quiet Place*** with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood; ***Cendrillon*** for The Julliard School; ***The Rape of Lucretia***, a double-bill of ***Gianni Schicchi/The Medium***, as well as ***La serva padrona***, Holst's ***Savitri***, and Walton's ***The Bear*** for the Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera. Additionally, he frequently gives master classes for the Washington National Opera Young Artists Program and Glimmerglass Opera.



Of a production of ***Norma*** with the Seattle Opera, *The Seattle Times* said, “his direction was remarkably good, theatrical and natural at the same time.” Likewise, of a production of ***Le nozze di Figaro*** for the Seattle Opera Young Artist program, he was praised for his “robust and lively” direction and his “clever, fast-paced staging” with reviewers noting that “Staging [*Le nozze di Figaro*] is a considerable challenge, one to which Kazaras adroitly rises. A dozen sly little gestures quickly establish character — and you can see every one of those gestures in the intimate ambience of the theater.”

He has directed over twenty productions for Seattle Opera’s main stage and Young Artists Program, plus productions for Opera Cleveland, Madison Opera, Eos Orchestra, Red: {an Orchestra}, the Santa Fe Pro Musica, and festivals at Cabrillo and Caramoor. He directed for educational programs such as Merola at San Francisco Opera Center, the Wolf Trap summer program, the Chautauqua Institute Voice Department, the Academy of Vocal Arts, the Hartt College of Music, and Florida State University. At UCLA since 2007, he has directed, supervised, or produced over thirty productions during his tenure.

A frequent panelist on the Toll Brothers Metropolitan Opera Quiz, Mr. Kazaras is also in demand as a judge for international competitions. He has adjudicated all three iterations of the International Wagner Competition at Seattle Opera. He was a judge for the first Elardo International Competition in New York, Marilyn Horne’s competition at Music Academy of the West, the José Iturbi Voice Competition at UCLA, the Les Azuriales Festival in Saint-Jean Cap Ferrat in France, and has adjudicated twice at The Juilliard School. He has also served as a judge for District and Regional Auditions of the Metropolitan Opera National Council. In the summer of 2015, he returned to Les Azuriales Festival as a Master Teacher. In 2016 he taught in Busseto, Italy at Aprile Millo’s Operavision Academy. Peter Kazaras is a member of the Glimmerglass Festival Artistic Advisory Board as well as the New York Festival of Song Advisory Board.

Current as of August 20, 2025