

Sunday
OCT 4
2:00 pm

Pretty Yende, soprano

One of the brightest stars of the opera world



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Jeff and Mary Weinberg are pleased to support performing arts experiences in our community and help bring world-class artists, like Pretty Yende, to the Lied Center stage.

Pretty Yende, soprano

With her magnetic charm, acclaimed operatic and solo performances worldwide, and a critically lauded discography, South African soprano Pretty Yende has quickly become one of the brightest stars of the classical music world.

Since making her professional operatic debut at the Latvian National Theatre in Riga as Micaela in *Carmen*, she has been seen at nearly all of the major theaters of the world, including the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Opéra National de Paris, Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Staatsoper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, Opernhaus Zürich and Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Vienna Staatsoper as well as many major concert venues.

Pretty Yende launches the 2026–27 season with a dynamic slate of concert appearances in Riga, Bordeaux and Shenzhen. She brings her celebrated artistry back to *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Opéra de Paris and the Vienna State Opera, where she will also appear in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. At the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Yende returns to one of her signature roles, Leïla in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*. The season also marks two major role debuts: Mimì in Puccini's *La Bohème* at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona and Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust* at the Houston Grand Opera. On the concert stage, she begins the new year with a highly anticipated joint recital alongside Ludovic Tézier and a solo recital at Salle Gaveau in Paris, followed by further engagements across Europe later in the season.

Last season underscored Yende's extraordinary versatility and international appeal. She appeared at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Opéra de Monte-Carlo in a special gala series dedicated to Josephine Baker, before closing the year with *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, a gala concert at the Teatro Comunale di Bologna, a Christmas concert at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and a New Year's Eve concert with the Staatskapelle Dresden. She then returned to the Royal Opera House and the Opéra de Paris to star in Richard Eyre's *La Traviata*. Further highlights included an appearance at the Vienna Opera Ball and her Los Angeles Philharmonic debut with Maestro Gustavo Dudamel in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. At the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, Yende appeared in Verdi's *Requiem*, Puccini's *La Bohème*, and made her role debut as Liù in *Turandot*. She was also welcomed back to the Vienna State Opera for *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Don Pasquale*, and led a wide-ranging series of solo recitals and gala concerts across Spain, Monaco, Germany, France, the United States, Poland, the Netherlands, Austria and Croatia.

2024–25 brought Yende back to the Metropolitan Opera for *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. She made her Puccini debut as Magda in *La Rondine* at the Opera de Monte Carlo and reprised *La Fille du Régiment* at the Bayerische Staatsoper. At the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, she made a title role debut in Handel's *Semele*, which she reprised also at the Royal Opera House later in the season. Yende reprised *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Semperoper Dresden and returned to Teatro di San Carlo with *La Fille du Régiment*. She made two more role debuts last season: Lina in Verdi's *Stiffelio* at the Dortmund Konzerthaus and Leonora in Verdi's *Il Trovatore*. On the

concert stage, Yende appeared for *Barber: Knoxville, Summer of 1915* with the Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, a gala recital at the Vienna Opera and a gala concert at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. On December 7, 2024, Yende made a historic music appearance singing “Amazing Grace” at the ceremonial reopening concert of Notre Dame in Paris.

In 2023–24, Yende returned to the Wiener Staatsoper to star in *La Sonnambula*. She came back to Paris Opera to appear as Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*; and at the Royal Opera House, she reprised in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. 2024 started with *La Traviata* performances at the Staatsoper Berlin and a return to the Bayerische Staatsoper as Adina in *L'elisir d'Amore*. At the Frankfurt Opera, Yende made her role debut in Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* as Cleopatra in the new production directed by Nadja Loschky. She ended the season with another role debut and a title role in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples. Additionally, Yende made multiple recital and concert appearances in Paris, Antwerp, Palermo, Dortmund, Abu-Dhabi, Tokyo, Madrid, Bordeaux and Saint-Denis.

Highlights of the 2022–23 season include appearances in *Romeo et Juliette* and *The Magic Flute* at the Paris Opera, and a debut at the San Francisco Opera House as Violetta Valerie in Verdi's *La Traviata* in the new production by Shawna Lucey. She returned to Wiener Staatsoper to star in the title role in Massenet's *Manon* and as Marie in *La fille du regiment*, and she reprised the role of Michaela in *Carmen* at the Staatsoper Berlin. At the Staatsoper Hamburg, she made her role debut as Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto* and returned to all four heroines, Olympia/Antonia/Giulietta/Stella, in Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. On the concert stage, Yende made her return with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Carnegie Hall and Kimmel Center performing Mahler's Symphony No. 4 under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin; she also made multiple recital appearances in places like Kansas, Princeton, Geneva, Naples, Gstaad, Vienna, Festival Auvers-sur-Oise. Additionally, she made a guest appearance in Paris for the annual Concert de Paris to celebrate Bastille Day.

On May 6, 2023, Yende performed at the coronation of King Charles III at Westminster Abbey. She became the first African solo artist to perform at the coronation of a British monarch, performing "Sacred Fire," a piece written by composer Sarah Class specifically for the occasion, followed by Handel's "Oh, had I Jubal's Lyre" from *Joshua* and "Care selve" from *Atalanta*.

Her rise onto the global stage includes highlights from her acclaimed Metropolitan Opera debut, stepping in as the Countess Adele in *Le Comte Ory*; her role and house debut as Marie in *La fille du Régiment* at the Teatro de la Maestranza in Seville; debuts at Opéra national de Paris as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the Gran Teatre del Liceu as Norina in *Don Pasquale*, with the Los Angeles Opera as Micaëla in *Carmen*, at Staatsoper Hamburg as Fiorilla in *Il Turco in Italia*, and her debut at the Theater an der Wien as Countess Adèle. Additional highlights include Rosina, Adina, the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette*, Elvira in *I Puritani*, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Met; Adina at the Royal Opera House; Lucia at the Opéra national de Paris and Deutsche Oper Berlin; Adina at the Staatsoper Berlin; Pamina at the

Grand Théâtre de Genève; Elvira at Opernhaus Zürich; Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Los Angeles Opera; Countess Adèle and Musetta in *La Bohème* at Teatro alla Scala; her role debut as Teresa in *Benvenuto Cellini* in Paris; and *Lucia di Lammermoor* in concert at the Cape Town Opera.

Highlights on the concert stage include her Carnegie Hall recital debut with pianist Kamal Khan, with *The New York Times* acclaiming, “a gracefulness that can seem decidedly divine seems to radiate from Ms. Yende.” She later returned to Carnegie Hall to join the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra for a performance of Mozart’s *Exsultate, Jubilate* and Mahler’s Symphony No. 4. Yende has presented concerts in Switzerland, Spain, Austria, Johannesburg, South Africa, Germany, Italy, Prague and the Netherlands.

In 2016, she released her debut album, *A Journey*, for Sony Classical, which won several awards, including 2017 International Opera Award – Best Recording (Solo Recital), an Echo Award for best newcomer at the Echo Klassik Awards 2017, as well as the first opera singer in her home country being awarded an International Achiever Award at the South African Metro FM Awards. She appeared as a musical guest on several television shows, including *The Late Show with Steven Colbert*, *The Wendy Williams Show* and *Good Morning America*. She released her second solo album, *Dreams*, one year later on Sony Classical, which won her the Readers’ Choice Award at the 2018 International Opera Awards, with *Opera Now* raving: “South African Yende has a delicious instrument, with a youthful quiver of passion to it, and a wonderfully secure technique.”

A 2011 graduate of the Young Artists Accademia of the Teatro alla Scala, Yende made her debut with the company in 2010 as Berenice in Rossini’s *L’Occasione fa il Ladro*. In 2010, she became the first artist in the history of the Belvedere competition to win the top prize in every category and then went on to win First Prize in the Operalia Competition in 2011.

Other prestigious awards include an award from the South African government, The Order of Ikhamanga in Silver, for her excellent achievement and international acclaim in the field of opera and serving as a role model to aspiring young musicians. And more recently, she was a recipient of the Italian Knighthood, Ordine Stella d’Italia, for her work in building extraordinary relations between Italy and other countries—the youngest South African ever awarded this accolade.