



## PRESS RELEASE

### PHAME Prepares to Open *The Poet's Shadow* at Hampton Opera Center in Three Weeks

August 1, 2019



*Photos by Friderike Heuer*

*I think it's about time that something like this has happened. . . I think it's about time that people know that oh, these students can actually produce an actual play by themselves and everything that is written, everything that is said, and everything that is done is done by the students. It's really really cool. And then of course collaborating with the Portland Opera, the very first time that we've done that, it's just going to be mind blowing for the audiences that come to see it.*

—Anne-Marie Plass, PHAME performer and board member

PHAME's collaborative rock opera opens Friday, August 23 at Hampton Opera Center. The cast includes more than thirty adults with developmental disabilities, including five lead characters, a movement chorus, an ensemble of musicians playing iPads, and a choir. The rock opera was written by eight PHAME students in collaboration with Alexis Hamilton, Portland Opera's Manager of Education and Outreach, and is the first fully staged PHAME production written by people with developmental disabilities.

The rock opera brings to fruition an 18-month collaboration between PHAME Academy and Portland Opera. In addition to lending PHAME the use of their Hampton Opera Center for the production's performances, Portland Opera has taught opera-related classes at PHAME and is providing one-on-one vocal coaching to lead actors. The production also partners with Portland's acclaimed dance duo Wobbly Dance, who are choreographing the movement chorus, and with Metropolitan Youth Symphony, whose students will join PHAME's iPad musicians in making up the production's orchestra.

A contemporary and original fairy tale, *The Poet's Shadow* tells the story of Elizabeth, a young poet who, in despair following a break up, writes a series of poems that take on a life of their own. In search of resolution, she embarks on a quest that will challenge everything she knows about courage, strength, and love.

*The Poet's Shadow* features artists with developmental disabilities at every stage of the process, not just writing and performing the opera, but also composing the music, designing the costumes, creating set design elements, and more.

#### ***The Poet's Shadow***

Seven performances: August 23, 24, 25 (matinee), 28, 29, 30, 31 (matinee)

Hampton Opera Center, 211 Southeast Caruthers Street Portland, OR 97214

Tickets on sale now at [www.phamepdx.org/poet](http://www.phamepdx.org/poet)

**PHAME Academy** is a fine and performing arts academy serving adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We offer three ten-week terms of arts-based classes each year, as well as many performance opportunities. Taught by talented arts education professionals, our classes include visual art, acting, choir, dance, musical theatre and many more. PHAME is built upon the belief that art is for everyone. We believe that students, artists, teachers, and the greater community can empower themselves through the arts. With that in mind, PHAME brings passion, joy, and rigor to arts education and performance.

**Portland Opera** is an acclaimed opera company whose mission is to inspire, challenge and uplift its audiences by creating productions of high artistic quality that celebrate the beauty and breadth of opera.

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