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Photos of the Annual Meeting, Seattle Opera Chairman's Award, Artists of the Year and the 2007/08 Season may be downloaded from:

<http://www.seattleopera.org/news/press/library.aspx?id=7>

Lawrence Brownlee and Thomas Lynch Named Seattle Opera Artists of the Year

**Seattle Opera Honors Governor Gregoire, Mayor Nickels,
and Seattle City Council with new Seattle Opera Chairman's Award**

Seattle Opera Board Announced for 2008/09

SEATTLE—On Tuesday, July 15, during its Annual Meeting at McCaw Hall, Seattle Opera General Director Speight Jenkins announced that the company's Artist of the Year awards went to tenor Lawrence Brownlee, who performed the role of Arturo in Seattle Opera's production of Bellini's *I Puritani* in May 2008, and to Thomas Lynch, set designer for Seattle Opera's production of Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* in August 2007 and Seattle Opera's co-production with the Metropolitan Opera of Gluck's *Iphigenia in Tauris* in October 2007.

"Larry Brownlee represents all that our Young Artists Program hope to accomplish," said Jenkins. "He is one of the great singers of the world, and his performances in *I Puritani* will echo forever in the memory of those who attended them."

"Opera is more than fortunate to have as talented a theater designer as Tom Lynch coming into our world," Jenkins continued. "Starting in 1988, through nine productions, he has created

brilliant sets for Seattle Opera. Seattle has been further favored by his appointment as Professor in Scenic Design at the University of Washington.”

After completing two seasons with Seattle Opera’s Young Artists Program (in 2000/01 and 2001/02), Brownlee went on to win both the Marian Anderson and the Richard Tucker Awards in 2006, the first time a singer had won both awards in the same year. As Arturo in Seattle Opera’s *I Puritani* last spring, he received tremendous critical acclaim. "...when tenor Lawrence Brownlee (as Arturo) went for a full-voiced, unheard-of high F (above high C) in Act III, the level of excitement rose to disbelief. Most tenors can't sing that high without inhaling helium first; Brownlee made it sound easy," Melinda Bargreen wrote in a May 4, 2008 Seattle Times review.

This is the first time a set designer has won the coveted Artist of the Year award. Gluck’s *Iphigenia in Tauris*, was Thomas Lynch’s fifth set design for Seattle Opera, and the company’s first co-production with the Metropolitan Opera. His first set design for Seattle Opera was Gluck’s *Orphée et Eurydice*, and he has returned for Handel’s *Xerxes*, and Wagner’s *Lohengrin*, *Fliegende Holländer*, and *Ring des Nibelungen* (the *Ring* Cycle was performed in 2001, 2005, and will be returning in August 2009). Lynch received an Eddy Award (Entertainment Design) for his naturalistic set design for Seattle Opera’s 2001 *Ring* Cycle.

In 1991, the Seattle Opera’s Artist of the Year award was created to honor the individual singer, conductor, director, or designer who had made the most significant contribution to the success of the season. At the conclusion of the 2003/04 season, Seattle Opera began honoring two Artists of the Year for the season: one a conductor, director, or designer; the other a singer. Participating in the selection process of Seattle Opera’s Artists of the Year are members of Seattle Opera’s Board of Trustees, Diamond Level and Platinum Circle donors, and staff, as well as selected members of the local press. This is the company’s seventeenth annual selection of Artist of the Year.

At the Annual Meeting, the 2008/09 Board of Trustees was announced. It was also announced that Seattle Opera expects to achieve a balanced budget for the 2007/08 season. Chairman of the Board John Nesholm announced a new award, the *Seattle Opera Chairman’s Award*, to recognize and honor those who have given exceptional support to Seattle Opera. The inaugural *Seattle Opera Chairman’s Award* was presented to Washington State Governor Chris Gregoire, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels, and the Seattle City Council. The unique glass and copper award was designed and hand-crafted by Seattle Opera’s Scenic Studios. Mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, who will be performing the role of Amneris in Seattle Opera’s upcoming *Aida*

from August 2 – 23, 2008, sang “Empio dirò, tu sei” from Handel’s *Giulio Cesare*, and “Habanera” from Bizet’s *Carmen*, in honor of the recipients.

Short Biographies of 2008/09 Artists of the Year Lawrence Brownlee and Thomas Lynch

Lawrence Brownlee

Tenor

Lawrence Brownlee was most recently seen at Seattle Opera as Arturo in Bellini’s *I Puritani*. He sang Lindoro in Seattle Opera’s *L’Italiana in Algeri* in October 2006. Since completing Seattle Opera’s Young Artists Program, he has made debuts at La Scala, Covent Garden, Hamburg, Vienna, Trieste, Brussels, Rome, Bologna, Madrid, Dresden, and Zurich, and stateside at Houston Grand Opera, in San Francisco with the Opera (concert) and Symphony, with Opera Company of Philadelphia and Boston Lyric Opera, among others. Brownlee made his Seattle Opera mainstage debut as Ernesto in Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* and later returned as Arcadio in Catán’s *Florencia en el Amazonas*. In 2006, he became the first singer to win both the Marian Anderson and Richard Tucker Awards in the same year. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 2007, and in future seasons he returns to that company regularly, as well as to La Scala, Seattle, Vienna, and Opera Company of Philadelphia. Upcoming engagements include debuts in Berlin at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, at Opera National de Paris and at Washington National Opera. The tenor is a frequent recitalist and this summer adds two recordings to his growing discography.

Thomas Lynch

Set Designer

Thomas Lynch has designed sets for the Metropolitan Opera (Handel’s *Rodelinda*), New York City Opera, San Francisco Opera, and—abroad—Royal Opera Covent Garden, Nederlandse Opera, and the Vienna Staatsoper. He made his Seattle Opera debut in 1988 designing Gluck’s *Orphée et Eurydice*, and has returned for Handel’s *Xerxes*, Wagner’s *Lohengrin*, *Fliegende Holländer*, *Ring des Nibelungen*, and Seattle Opera’s 2007 co-production with the Metropolitan Opera of Gluck’s *Iphigenia in Tauris*. His more than 250 theater credits include designs for Arena Stage, Goodman Theatre, Guthrie Theater, McCarter Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, ACT, Mark Taper Forum, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and the premiere of Edward Albee’s new play *Me Myself & I* at the McCarter Theater last January. Lynch recently designed sets for Intiman Theatre’s *A Streetcar Named Desire*, which opened last week in Seattle. On Broadway, his credits include *Contact*, the Tony-nominated *Heidi Chronicles* and *Music Man*, the 2004 revival of *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Tintypes*, and *Swing!*. Lynch has received an Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in New York Off-Broadway design, an Obie for the 2005 *Woman Before a Glass*, the Elliott Norton Award, two Joseph Jefferson Awards, and, for Seattle Opera’s 2001 *Ring*, an EDDY (*Entertainment Design*) award. In the fall of 2005, Lynch became the inaugural Floyd and Delores Jones endowed Chair in the Arts, and in September 2006 he became Professor in Scenic Design at University of Washington’s School of Drama.

Seattle Opera 2008/09 Board of Trustees Announced at Annual Meeting

At Seattle Opera's Annual Meeting, the 2008/2009 Board of Trustees was announced.

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Founded in 1963, Seattle Opera is one of the leading opera companies in the United States. The company is recognized internationally for its theatrically compelling and musically accomplished performances, especially the Opera's interpretations of the works of Richard Wagner. Seattle Opera's Wagner tradition began under the leadership of the company's founding general director, Glynn Ross, and has continued since 1983 under General Director Speight Jenkins. Since 1975, Seattle Opera has presented 35 cycles of the *Ring* (three different productions), in addition to acclaimed productions of all the other major operas in the Wagner canon. Seattle Opera has achieved the highest per capita attendance of any major opera company in the United States, and draws opera goers from four continents, nineteen countries, and fifty states.