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Singers Gather in Seattle for “Wagnerian Idol”

Second International Wagner Competition to be Held at McCaw Hall August 16

Competition Includes Audience-Voted Prize

Seattle—Eight singers from around the world will compete in Seattle Opera’s Second International Wagner Competition on Saturday, August 16. The first competition held in 2006 was dubbed “Wagnerian Idol”, reflecting the audience-vote component to the competition. Seattle Opera is internationally well-known for its focus on the works of Richard Wagner, including the company’s signature performances of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. The company’s next complete *Ring* cycle will be performed in August 2009.

Each of the finalists—aged between 25 and 39—will perform two arias accompanied by the Seattle Opera Orchestra conducted by Asher Fisch, Seattle Opera’s principal guest conductor. Full program details are listed below. The finalists were selected via a series of international auditions. They are competing for two cash prizes of \$15,000. In addition to the two main prizes, there is an “Audience choice” prize and an “Orchestra choice” prize.

The 2008 finalists are:

Erin Caves, tenor, from Stockton, California

Jason Collins, tenor, from Beaufort/Seneca, South Carolina

Deborah Humble, mezzo-soprano, from Adelaide, Australia

Darren Jeffery, bass-baritone, from Cambridgeshire, England

Peter Lobert, bass, from Jena, Germany

Michael Weinius, tenor, from Stockholm, Sweden

Nadine Weissmann, mezzo-soprano, from Berlin, Germany

Elza van den Heever, soprano, from Johannesburg, South Africa

The alternates are:

Carla Thelen Hanson, soprano, from Rochester, Minnesota

Joni Henson, soprano, from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada

The judges for Seattle Opera's second International Wagner Competition are an international group of authorities in all aspects of opera production—Hans-Joachim Frey, the general director and chief executive officer of the Theater Bremen, which includes Oper Bremen; tenor Ben Heppner, well known for his acclaimed performances of the Wagnerian repertoire; stage director Peter Kazaras, a Seattle Opera Artistic Director of the company's Young Artists Program; Pamela Rosenberg, the administrative director of the Berlin Philharmonic and former general director of San Francisco Opera; Stephen Wadsworth, frequent director of Seattle Opera productions, including its highly praised 2001 and 2005 *Ring* cycles and upcoming 2009 *Ring*; and Eva Wagner-Pasquier, the daughter of Wolfgang Wagner and an artistic advisor to the Aix-en-Provence Festival.

The second International Wagner Competition is once again made possible by a generous contribution from the Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences.

The first International Wagner Competition, held in August 2006, was created by Seattle Opera's General Director Speight Jenkins to identify and recognize qualified, emerging opera singers who demonstrate clear promise of an important career in the Wagnerian repertoire. The winners of the 2006 competition were soprano Miriam Murphy from Dublin, Ireland, and baritone James Rutherford from Dulwich, England.

International Wagner Competition

Saturday, August 16, 2008

7:30PM

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Seattle, Washington

Program

Die Meistersinger Overture

Elza van den Heever	"Dich, teure Halle" (<i>Tannhäuser</i>)
Erin Caves	"Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater" (<i>Die Walküre</i>)
Peter Lobert	"Mögst du, mein Kind" (<i>Der Fliegende Holländer</i>)
Deborah Humble	Waltraute's Narrative (<i>Götterdämmerung</i>)
Michael Weinius	"Preislied" (<i>Die Meistersinger</i>)
Nadine Weissmann	"Weiche, Wotan, Weiche" (<i>Das Rheingold</i>)
Darren Jeffrey	"Wahn! Wahn!" (<i>Die Meistersinger</i>)

Jason Collins “Siegmond heiss ich” (*Die Walküre*)

Intermission

Deborah Humble “Weiche, Wotan, Weiche” (*Das Rheingold*)
Jason Collins “Nur eine Waffe taugt” (*Parsifal*)
Peter Lobert Hagen’s Watch (*Götterdämmerung*)
Elza van den Heever “Einsam in trüben Tagen” (*Lohengrin*)
Michael Weinius “Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater” (*Die Walküre*)
Nadine Weissmann Waltraute’s Narrative (*Götterdämmerung*)
Erin Caves “Winterstürme” (*Die Walküre*)
Darren Jeffrey “Abendlich strahlt der Sonne Auge” (*Das Rheingold*)

Voting Pause

Introduction of the judges and announcement of competition results.

For tickets and information, call 800-426-1619 or 206-389-7676 or visit www.seattleopera.org

Seattle Opera’s Board of Trustees dedicates the 2008/09 season to Speight Jenkins in celebration of his 25th Anniversary as General Director.

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About Seattle Opera

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. 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 and fifty states.