



SEATTLE OPERA
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

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Sue Elliott Appointed Seattle Opera's Director of Education

June 3—Seattle Opera's Executive Director Kelly Tweeddale announced today that the company has appointed Sue Elliott as its new Director of Education. Elliott begins on July 12, 2010. Perry Lorenzo, Seattle Opera's Director of Education from 1992 to 2009, passed away on December 19, 2009.

Says General Director Speight Jenkins of Elliott's appointment: "I am enthusiastic about Sue joining our company. She has worked for quite a few years in different and demanding positions at the Houston Grand Opera, and I find her to be exactly the right person to carry on and expand our vital education program. Seattle Opera is very fortunate to have her join us."

Elliott is currently serving as the manager for HGOco, the educational outreach branch of Houston Grand Opera. In this role, she created a new model for community engagement and education through HGO's *Song of Houston* initiative, a program that creates new works celebrating the people of Houston through collaborative educational and artistic projects. In 2009, *Song of Houston* received the Leading Lights Diversity Award in Arts and Culture from the National MultiCultural Institute—the first opera company to do so.

Through *Song of Houston*, Elliott facilitated the creation of the program's new works, including *The Refuge*, performed in November 2007, which allowed the company to connect with more than 200,000 first-time operagoers. Elliott, the 2009 recipient of the Houston Grand Opera Guild's Bravo Award for Professional Excellence, was also instrumental in the creation of a Mariachi opera and a project celebrating blues music in Houston.

A former stage manager who has worked with Houston Grand Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, and Canadian Opera Company, among others, Elliott was the first Canadian recipient of an OPERA America fellowship in Production and Stage Management. Elliott is an accomplished clarinetist and pianist who holds a Master of Music Performance degree from the University of Southern California, an Artist Diploma from the University of Toronto, and a Bachelor of Music Performance degree from McGill University in Montreal.

"Seattle Opera's adult education programs are recognized as a gold standard in encouraging arts exploration," says Seattle Opera Executive Director Kelly Tweeddale. "I am excited to welcome Sue to the company to bring a new level of community engagement and collaborative programming to our in-school programs and to continue the great work that Perry Lorenzo championed for so many years. Sue's approach to the community is innovative and comprehensive, two great adjectives that also describe Seattle Opera as a company."

Along with this appointment of a new Director of Education, Seattle Opera's Education Department has undergone some changes. Jonathan Dean, previously Seattle Opera's Education Artistic Administrator, has assumed the newly created position of Director of Public Programs and Media. Aren Der Harcopian, previously the Young Artists Program Manager, has been appointed Seattle Opera's Artistic Administrator and Director of the Young Artists Program. Dean has been in his new position since March; Der Harcopian transitions to his new role in July. Melanie Ross, previously Seattle Opera's Company Manager, is now Director of Artistic Operations and Season Planning.

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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 38 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 operagoers from four continents and fifty states.