



SEATTLE OPERA
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Seattle Opera To Tweet World Premiere Libretto May 3-8 Twitter Countdown to *Amelia* Opening Night

Amelia Videos Conclude Second Year of Wallace Excellence Award Projects Final Video in “Making of *Amelia*” Series Released

April 28—Seattle Opera will share **Gardner McFall’s *Amelia* libretto** with the world, 140 characters at a time, beginning Monday, May 3 at 9:00 am (PST). On a dedicated Twitter account, **@AmeliaLibretto**, Seattle Opera will tweet the entire libretto as just one of the many online activities Seattle Opera has rolled out over the past several months to prepare audiences for the May 8 world premiere of *Amelia*. Seattle Opera has also created a seven-part “**Making of *Amelia*” video series**, which chronicles the behind-the-scenes process of bringing an opera to the stage for the first time. The final video in the series, which includes music from an early orchestral rehearsal of the opera – “All Coming Together” – was released yesterday. View all seven videos, including “Costume Research and Design,” “Working with a New Score,” “A Set Designer’s Vision,” “Creating a Village Scene,” “Taking Flight” and “The Rehearsal Process” at <http://www.seattleopera.org/tickets/2009-2010/amelia/videos.aspx> or on Seattle Opera’s YouTube channel. Inspiration for these activities comes from Seattle Opera’s **Wallace Foundation Excellence Award** grant, which focuses on “Community Connections Through Technology.” The grant spans four years, each with a distinct focus, and aims to create new communities and strengthen existing ones through technology.

The company has also presented a series of panel discussions and lectures over the past few months and streamed them live for online viewing at www.livestream.com/seattleopera. Videos of these events, which range from conversations with the artists to panels of Vietnam War veterans, are still available on the **livestream channel** for on-demand viewing.

The Wallace Projects also include a temporary exhibit, courtesy of the **Museum of Flight**, that will be installed in the **McCaw Hall Lobbies** during the run of *Amelia*. Featuring photographs chronicling the history of flight, this exhibit will be enhanced with a guided cell phone tour, akin to those offered by museums, where viewers can call a provided number on their mobile phones to access pre-recorded information about the items on display. Seattle Opera has partnered with the Museum of Flight for *Amelia* because the opera concerns flight (indeed, the opera's cast list includes Icarus, Daedalus, and a mythical 1930s female aviatrix, in addition to a Navy pilot and an aeronautical engineer). Speight Jenkins, Seattle Opera's General Director, believes *Amelia* is a natural fit for Seattle, with its deep connection to aviation.

To ensure authenticity in this new production, which is set in America and Vietnam in the 1960s, 80s, and 90s, Seattle Opera has enlisted a team of advisors. "As far as we know," said Speight Jenkins, "*Amelia* is the first American opera to feature singing in Vietnamese. Not only is this language unfamiliar to American opera singers, Vietnamese is a tonal language, and therefore extremely complicated to set to music and sing accurately." In writing the opera, composer Daron Hagen worked with Vietnamese language specialist **Trang thu Nguyen** to help craft some of the vocal lines. Seattle Opera has engaged teacher, musician and interpreter **Cay Bach**, who has been working closely with the music staff as **Vietnamese language coach** since the 2008 workshop. **Roxanne Corff**, a nurse at Harborview Medical Center, serves as the production's **medical advisor**. Corff has provided hospital equipment for props and costumes, and recently led a training session with Harborview staff for the performers who will play doctors and nurses, teaching them how to enact a resuscitation. Pilot **Michael Moore**, Seattle Opera's scenic studios manager, led the scene shop in creating a realistic **replication of Amelia Earhart's Lockheed Electra**. Moore's engineering designs will be on display at McCaw Hall during performances of *Amelia*.

In addition to the Wallace Foundation grant, Seattle Opera has secured a grant from The **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** to underwrite the costs for two additional opera companies to present *Amelia* in the next few years. Community engagement plans, background materials, and videos will be provided to

companies to support their own community engagement activities surrounding future productions of *Amelia*. “If there had not been a second performance of *The Barber of Seville*, *La traviata*, or *Madama Butterfly*, these works might not be as well known as they are today,” said Jenkins. “Seattle Opera has often presented additional performances of new works and this grant from The Mellon Foundation virtually assures *Amelia* of additional performances, laying a terrific foundation for future grants and serving the art form of opera immeasurably.” Support for *Amelia* also comes from the **Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences**, the **Lundgren Endowment for New Works**, **4Culture**, the **Paul G. Allen Family Foundation**, and the **National Endowment for the Arts**.

Amelia opens on May 8 and runs through May 22. Single tickets start at \$25 and are available online at seattleopera.org, by calling 206.389.7676 or 800.426.1619, or by mobile phone at mobile.seattleopera.org. More information about the production can be found online at www.seattleopera.org/amelia.

***Amelia* Creative Team and Artists**

Amelia was composed by **Daron Aric Hagen**, whose other operas include *Shining Brow*, *Bandanna*, and *Vera of Las Vegas*. The libretto, which has been published by the University of Washington Press, was written by American poet **Gardner McFall**, and is inspired by her book of poems, *The Pilot's Daughter*. **Stephen Wadsworth** created the opera's story, which follows the final days of one woman's pregnancy as she deals with the lasting impact of her pilot father's disappearance during the Vietnam War. **Wadsworth** also directs the production, which features set designs by **Thomas Lynch**, costumes by Tony award-winner **Ann Hould-Ward**, and lighting design by **Duane Schuler**. Seattle Symphony Music Director **Gerard Schwarz** conducts.

Mezzo-soprano **Kate Lindsey**, fresh from her success as Nicklausse in the new production of *The Tales of Hoffmann* at the Metropolitan Opera, makes her Seattle Opera debut in the title role. Tenor **William Burden**, a Seattle Opera favorite, creates the role of Dodge, Amelia's father. **Nathan Gunn**, who also created roles in the world premieres of André Previn's *Brief Encounter*, Jonathan Dove's *Man on the Moon*, and Tobias Picker's *American Tragedy*, alternates with baritone **David McFerrin** in the role of Paul, Amelia's husband. Soprano **Jane Eaglen**, known for her many Wagner roles all over the world

and at Seattle Opera, creates the role of Helen, Amelia's aunt. Also returning to Seattle Opera are mezzo-soprano **Luretta Bybee**, who sings Amanda, Amelia's mother, and baritone **David Won**. Making their Seattle Opera debuts in supporting roles are some of America's hottest young talents, including sopranos **Jennifer Zetlan**, **Ashley Emerson**, and **Karen Vuong**; tenor **Nicholas Coppolo**; baritone **Museop Kim**; and bass **Jordan Bisch**.

Please note: the following artists list for Amelia replaces all previously published or announced cast lists. Further information on the 2009/10 season and full biographies of the cast members can be found at seattleopera.org.

Amelia

Music by Daron Aric Hagen
Libretto by Gardner McFall
Story by Stephen Wadsworth
In English with English Captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
8 Performances: May 8, 9m, 12, 15, 16m, 19, 21, and 22, 2010.

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours 30 minutes, including 1 intermission
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m.; matinees begin at 2:00 p.m.

World Premiere Production

Artists

Amelia:	Kate Lindsey [†]
Dodge:	William Burden
Amanda:	Luretta Bybee
Paul:	Nathan Gunn/David McFerrin ^{†*}
The Flier:	Jennifer Zetlan [†]
Icarus/Young Boy:	Nicholas Coppolo [†]
Daedalus/Young Boy's Father:	Jordan Bisch [†]
Helen:	Jane Eaglen
Young Amelia:	Ashley Emerson [†]
Trang/Nurse:	Karen Vuong [†]
Huy/Doctor:	David Won
Interpreter/2 nd Doctor:	Museop Kim [†]

Conductor:	Gerard Schwarz
Stage Director:	Stephen Wadsworth
Set Designer:	Thomas Lynch
Costume Designer:	Ann Hould-Ward [†]
Lighting Designer:	Duane Schuler
English Captions:	Jonathan Dean

Sets and Costumes: Seattle Opera

†Company debut

*On May 9 and 16 only

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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.