



SEATTLE OPERA
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

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Noah Baetge Named as Finalist in Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions

Former Seattle Opera Young Artist will Sing at the Met on Feb. 22

Seattle—Noah Baetge, a former Seattle Opera Young Artist, has been named as a finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Baetge, a native of the Puget Sound region, was a Young Artist with Seattle Opera for two seasons, from 2006/07 through 2007/08. On February 15, Baetge was named one of eight finalists who will sing on the Metropolitan Opera Stage on February 22 at 3:00 p.m. EST, with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra conducted by Patrick Summers. All eight finalists are considered winners in the Metropolitan Opera competition.

The eight finalists were chosen from 23 semi-finalists, all between the ages of 20 and 30 years old. Nearly 1800 singers participated in the initial auditions, held in 45 districts and 15 regions throughout the United States and Canada. The finalists will be competing for individual cash prizes of \$15,000 each at the Grand Finals Concert. Perhaps even more valuable is the opportunity to perform for an audience that will include opera company executives, music critics, agents, and other significant figures in the music world. In the semi-finals on Sunday, Baetge sang "Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön" from Mozart's *Magic Flute* and Edgardo's aria from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Anthony Roth Constanzo, a countertenor, was also named as a finalist. Though not a Seattle Opera Young Artist, Constanzo has been engaged as a guest artist in the upcoming Seattle Opera Young Artists production of Benjamin Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, to be performed between March 27 and April 5, 2009, at the Meydenbauer Theatre in Bellevue.

"I am very happy that Noah is a finalist at the Met," said Seattle Opera General Director Speight Jenkins. "When he sang in our chorus, he showed off a remarkable voice, one that became even more considerable as a Young Artist. He frequently sang such arias as "Che gelida manina" from *La bohème* and "Salut! demeure" from *Faust*, always with great line and a wonderful high C. I'm sure that this competition will enable him to move forward quickly into what I hope will be a major career."

"At the same time it's great to welcome Anthony Roth Constanzo here for our *Midsummer Night's Dream* performances," commented Jenkins. "I am sure he will bring a fine presence and a superb countertenor to this extraordinary opera."

Last season, Baetge appeared as Rinuccio and Thèière in the Seattle Opera Young Artists double bill of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and Ravel's *Enfant et les sortilèges*. In the 2006/07 season with the Young Artists, he appeared as Fenton in Verdi's *Falstaff* and Don José in the touring production of Peter Brook's *Tragedy of Carmen*, an adaptation of Bizet's *Carmen*. Baetge also sang two roles on the company's mainstage in 2006/07: the animal vendor in *Rosenkavalier* and Parpignol in Puccini's *Bohème*. Prior to joining the Young Artists Program, Baetge performed with the Seattle Opera Chorus from 2003 through the 2005/06 season.

About the Young Artists Program

Now in its eleventh season, Seattle Opera launched the Young Artists Program in 1998 under the leadership of General Director Speight Jenkins and Education Director Perry Lorenzo. Artists selected for Seattle Opera's Young Artists Program receive top-rate vocal coaching, instruction in diction, languages, acting, movement, stage makeup, and how to function effectively in the opera industry. In addition to their fall tour and spring production, they participate in several Seattle Opera outreach programs, bringing opera to more than 10,000 students through the company's *Experience Opera* and *Opera Goes to School* programs.

For additional information on the Young Artists Program, including ticket information and performance schedules for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, visit <http://www.seattleopera.org/affiliates/young/index.aspx>.

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About Seattle Opera

SEATTLE OPERA'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES DEDICATES THE 2008/09 SEASON TO SPEIGHT JENKINS IN CELEBRATION OF HIS 25TH ANNIVERSARY AS GENERAL DIRECTOR.

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 operagoers from four continents and fifty states.