



SEATTLE OPERA  
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

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**SEATTLE OPERA'S PRODUCTION OF  
HANDEL'S *JULIUS CAESAR*  
PREMIERES ON FEBRUARY 24, 2007**

**Family Matinee, March 4, Allows Students to Meet "Roman Soldiers,"  
Learn More About Baroque Opera**

Seattle, WA—Seattle Opera's first production of Handel's *Julius Caesar* (*Giulio Cesare in Egitto*) opens at Marion Oliver McCaw Hall on February 24, 2007, and runs through March 10, 2007. General Director Speight Jenkins said that he chose this particular opera after hearing famed Polish contralto Ewa Podles perform the leading role at the Canadian Opera Company.

"I found the production really beautiful and Ms. Podles amazing. I can honestly say that the whole afternoon passed like a flash. It was a very theatrical as well as an intensely musically enriching experience," said Jenkins, who arranged to use the same set by Paul Steinberg and costumes by Constance Hoffman for the Seattle Opera debut of Handel's *Julius Caesar*.

Podles sings Caesar in the Saturday/Wednesday cast that also includes French-Canadian soprano Alexandra Deshorties as Cleopatra, Japanese-American countertenor Brian Asawa as Tolomeo (Cleopatra's brother and rival), American mezzo-soprano Helene Schneiderman as Cornelia (a Roman widow captured by Tolomeo), and American mezzo-soprano Kristine Jepson in her Seattle Opera debut as Sesto (Cornelia's son). In the Sunday/Friday cast, English mezzo-soprano Anna Burford makes her U.S. opera debut as Caesar and American soprano Christine Brandes makes her Seattle Opera debut as Cleopatra. American mezzo-soprano Gloria Parker makes her Seattle Opera debut as Cornelia, American tenor Mark Crayton makes his Seattle Opera debut as Tolomeo, and American mezzo-soprano Carolyn Kahl (a former Seattle Opera Young Artist) returns to sing the role of Sesto.

The production is directed by Robin Guarino, who served as the associate director for Seattle Opera's 2001 and 2005 productions of Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*. Maestro Gary Thor Wedow, a noted Handel specialist, makes his Seattle Opera debut as conductor for *Julius Caesar*. Tony-award nominee Donald Byrd (*The Color Purple*) choreographed the dance elements, which include some exciting dance/fighting sequences.

Seattle Opera Press Release, page 2

Internationally-known Baroque instrumentalists Stephen Stubbs (baroque guitar and theorbo), Maxine Eilander (baroque harp), and Margriet Tindemans (viola da gamba) form the *continuo* group required for Baroque opera. Maestro Gary Thor Wedow and Assistant Conductor Philip Kelsey play dual harpsichords in the pit.

To encourage families to attend this Baroque classic, Seattle Opera has designated March 4 as Family Day, with \$15 tickets available for students ages fourteen to eighteen. During intermission, “Roman soldiers” and other costumed characters from the cast will be visiting the lobby areas of McCaw Hall, allowing families to see the colorful costumes and props up close. Students also receive a specially-designed Egyptian temporary tattoo, a souvenir study guide, a *Caesar*-specific activity sheet, and an opera sampler CD.

*Julius Caesar* runs for eight performances at McCaw Hall: February 24, 25, 28, and March 3, 4, 7, 9, and 10. Tickets start at \$41. For more information, call the Seattle Opera Ticket Office at 206.389.7676 or visit the website [www.seattleopera.org](http://www.seattleopera.org).

### ***JULIUS CAESAR (GIULIO CESARE IN EGITTO)***

Music by George Frideric Handel

Libretto by Nicola Francesco Haym

In Italian with English Captions

### **Seattle Opera Premiere**

#### **Marion Oliver McCaw Hall**

**8 Performances: February 24, 25m, 28, March 3, 4m, 7, 9, and 10, 2007**

Approximate Running Time: 3 hours and 20 minutes including 2 intermissions

Evening performances start at 7:30 p.m., matinees at 2:00 p.m.

Premiere: London, King’s Theatre, February 20, 1724

Tickets: \$41 to \$135

March 4 Family Day: \$15 student ticket (to age 18) when purchased with a full-price adult ticket

Seattle Opera Ticket Office: 206.389.7676/800.426.1619

Online Orders: [www.seattleopera.org](http://www.seattleopera.org)

#### **Artists**

Cesare: Ewa Podles/Anna Burford\*†

Cleopatra: Alexandra Deshorties/Christine Brandes\*†

Cornelia: Helene Schneiderman/Gloria Parker\*†

Sesto: Kristine Jepson†/Carolyn Kahl\*

Tolomeo: Brian Asawa/Mark Crayton\*†

Achilla: Arthur Woodley

Curio: Joseph Rawley

Nireno: David Korn

Conductor: Gary Thor Wedow†

Stage Director: Robin Guarino

Set Designer: Paul Steinberg

Costume Designer: Constance Hoffman†  
Lighting Designer: Robert Wierzel  
Choreographer: Donald Byrd†  
Hair & Makeup Designer: Joyce Degenfelder  
Fight Director: Geoffrey Alm  
English Captions: Jonathan Dean

\* On February 25 and March 4 and 9, 2007 only

† Company debut

### **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. 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 forty-nine states.

Ewa Podle's performances in *Julius Caesar* are made possible by generous financial support from the James and Sherry Raisbeck Singers' Endowment. Season Sponsors: The Boeing Company, Microsoft Corporation. Production Sponsors for *Julius Caesar*: National Endowment for the Arts, Mildred King Dunn, Lenore M. Hanauer, Nesholm Family Foundation. *Overtures to the Opera* Sponsor: Symetra Financial. Performance Sponsors for *Julius Caesar*: Quality Business Systems, The E. Nakamichi Foundation