



SEATTLE OPERA
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

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**Seattle Opera's Young Artists' Opera
Verdi's *Falstaff*
Opens March 30**

**Seattle Opera Gala *Fête in the Forest*
to be held March 31 at Bellevue's Meydenbauer Center**

Seattle—Seattle Opera's popular Young Artists Program returns to the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center for six performances of Verdi's *Falstaff*, on March 30, 31, April 1, 4, 6 and 7, 2007.

Drawing inspiration from Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, director Peter Kazaras plans to use Donald Eastman's set and Cynthia Savage's costumes in such a way that the audience will see how some of the magic of a stage performance is created. "At the Globe, they would perform the plays on two or three levels of stage with plenty of props and costumes but little or no painted scenery," said Kazaras. "During the questions and answers session after *The Turn of the Screw* last year, I realized people are very interested in the 'how did you do that?' aspects of opera."

Kazaras, who directed the last two Young Artist productions, is the Young Artists Program's artistic director. He has sung with companies all over the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, and other international companies.

Seattle Opera's Young Artists Program attracts more than 500 applicants each year. After a rigorous audition process, ten to twelve talented singers are chosen to train with the company for twenty weeks. The participants are emerging singers who have completed their college training and are embarking on professional careers in opera. The Young Artists study with an array of Seattle Opera staff members, coaches, and celebrated mainstage artists, and gain valuable performance experience in several outreach programs developed by Seattle Opera's Education Department. They complete their training with a fully-staged opera at the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center. Many graduates of the program have embarked upon their career with success, for example: former participants have appeared with more than fifty opera companies throughout North America and Europe, including several who have gone on to perform mainstage roles at Seattle Opera.

This season's Young Artists appearing in *Falstaff* are tenor Noah Baetge from Seattle, WA, soprano Holly Boaz from Vashon, WA, mezzo-soprano Teresa Herold from Fort Fairfield, ME, baritone Joshua Jeremiah

from Myerstown, PA, baritone David Lara from Buhler, KS, baritone Jonathan Lasch from Minneapolis, MN, soprano Caitlin Lynch from Detroit, MI, soprano Ani Maldjian from Los Angeles, CA, soprano Anya Matanovic from Issaquah, WA, bass-baritone Michael Anthony McGee from Dallas, TX, and tenor Marcus Glenn Shelton from Edmonds, WA.

Guest artists include tenor Ted Schmitz (a former Seattle Opera Young Artist), mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke from the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, tenor Jared Rogers (whose is an Iowa District Metropolitan Opera National Counsel auditions winner and a three-time NATS winner), and bass Marc Webster, a current member of the Juilliard Opera Center Studio.

Dean Williamson conducts *Falstaff*. He has conducted all of the Program's productions since 1998 and, on the Seattle Opera mainstage, conducted Offenbach's *Contes d'Hoffmann* in 2005. He will conduct Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* for Seattle Opera in 2008. The orchestra for *Falstaff* is made up of members of the Auburn Symphony.

Verdi's comic opera draws its plot from the three Shakespeare plays featuring the portly rogue Sir John Falstaff (*Henry IV parts 1 and 2*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*). Falstaff's plots and misadventures end happily in Windsor Forest, with the marriage of two young lovers, Nannetta and Fenton.

For partygoers at Seattle Opera's annual Gala on March 31, Windsor Forest will extend into the ballroom. Tickets to *Fête in the Forest* include a reception and an exclusive performance of the opera, followed by an elegant dinner and dance at the Meydenbauer Center. This is the first time that Seattle Opera's black-tie Gala, which raises money for the company's educational programs, has taken place in Bellevue and included a fully staged opera.

Falstaff opens March 30, the Gala performance follows on March 31. *Falstaff* continues on April 1, 4, 6, and 7, and all performances take place at the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, Washington. Tickets are \$15 for students and \$35 for adults. A special \$125 patron ticket supports the Young Artists Program. For more information about Seattle Opera's Young Artist's Program, visit www.seattleopera.org.

For more information about Seattle Opera's Gala *Fête in the Forest*, visit www.seattleoperagala.org.

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Young Artists Program Underwriters: 4Culture, Paul G. Allen Foundation, Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences, Hans Wolf Memorial Fund for Young Artists.

Experience Opera Sponsor: Bank of America.

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.



FALSTAFF

Seattle Opera
Young Artists Production

Music by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Arrigo Boito
Orchestration by Jonathan Dove

In Italian with English captions

March 30, 31 (Gala), April 1, 4, 6, and 7, 2007

Performed at the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, Washington
Evenings at 7:30 p.m., April 1 matinee at 2:00 p.m.

Ticket Prices: \$15 (student), \$35 (adult), and \$125 (patron)

Seattle Opera Ticket Office: 206.389.7676 or www.seattleopera.org

March 31 *Fête in the Forest*: \$350 to \$1,000 per person

For more information on *Fête in the Forest*: www.seattleoperagala.org

Cast

Falstaff: Michael Anthony McGee (3/30, 4/1, 4/6)/Joshua Jeremiah (3/31, 4/4, 4/7)

Mrs. Alice Ford: Holly Boaz (3/30, 4/1, 4/6)/Caitlin Lynch (3/31, 4/4, 4/7)

Ford: Jonathan Lasch (3/30, 4/1, 4/6)/David Lara (3/31, 4/4, 4/7)

Nannetta: Ani Maldjian (3/30, 4/1, 4/6)/Anya Matanovic (3/31, 4/4, 4/7)

Fenton: Marcus Shelton (3/30, 4/1, 4/6)/Noah Baetge (3/31, 4/4, 4/7)

Mistress Quickly: Teresa Herold

Mrs. Meg Page: Sasha Cooke (guest artist)

Bardolph: Jared Rogers (guest artist)

Pistol: Marc Webster (guest artist)

Dr. Caius: Ted Schmitz (guest artist)

Conductor: Dean Williamson

Director: Peter Kazaras

Set Designer: Donald Eastman

Costume Designer: Cynthia Savage

Lighting Designer: Connie Yun

Hair & Makeup Designer: Danyale Cook

English Captions: Jonathan Dean

Orchestra: Auburn Symphony

This opera concludes the 2006/07 Young Artists Program. After performing in Bellevue, the Young Artists will travel to Yakima to present Falstaff with the Yakima Symphony Orchestra.

Falstaff Performance Sponsors: Quality Business Systems, Jim and Gretchen Faulstich, and Bellevue Arts Commission.