



SEATTLE OPERA
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

FOR RELEASE: January 26, 2010

Press Contacts: Hilda Cullen, 206.676.5543, hilda.cullen@seattleopera.org
Sara Sorden, 206.676.5559, sara.sorden@seattleopera.org

Visuals Contact: Monte Jacobson, 206.676.5545, monte.jacobson@seattleopera.org

Opera Goes to School:
Seattle Opera's *Siegfried and the Ring of Fire* Returns to Local Schools

Students in Auburn, Seattle, Shoreline, and Yakima
Perform with Seattle Opera Young Artists

Seattle—Seattle Opera's educational *Opera Goes to School* program kicks off this week at Lawton Elementary School, as Seattle Opera's Education Department brings *Siegfried and the Ring of Fire* to several new elementary school students this winter. This program offers the young participants a chance to be involved in creating an opera—they sing, dance, play instruments, and create costumes—and the week-long residency culminates in a performance for students, teachers, and their families.

For the second year, *Opera Goes to School* will present *Siegfried and the Ring of Fire*, an adaptation of Wagner's *Siegfried*, created by Seattle Opera's Education Artistic Administrator Jonathan Dean. Dean's production condenses the five-hour *Siegfried*—adding a few borrowed plot points from *Die Walküre*, another opera in the *Ring des Nibelungen* cycle—into an hour-long, kid-friendly English opera. Last season was a “workshop” year, where the opera's music and dialogue were fine-tuned throughout the performance process. This year, the production—from sets and costumes to the score—was set from the start of the 2010 rehearsal process.

Up to 60 students perform in each school's production as singers, actors, and musicians. The Young Artists perform the roles of Wagner's gods, goddesses, and heroes, with the students performing as Valkyries, fire spirits, and forest birds, or playing in the orchestra. The students spend the first few days of the residency working with the teaching artists before they are joined by the Young Artists to put the finishing touches on their productions.

Siegfried and the Ring of Fire is directed by Vanessa Miller, returning for her sixth year with *Opera Goes to School*. Teaching artist RJ Tancioco, who plays Father Rhine and leads the student orchestra in the production, is returning for his second year with the program. Sets and props were designed by Phillip Lienau, with costumes by Deborah Skorstad, and movement designed by Gordon Carpenter. Puppets designed by puppeteer Brian Kooser also play important roles in *Siegfried*—from a small squirrel that the hero befriends to the evil dragon Fafner, which is so large it must be manipulated by three singers.

The Young Artists performing in *Siegfried and the Ring of Fire* are bass Erik Anstine, mezzo-soprano Jenni Bank, soprano Megan Hart, baritone Michael Krzankowski, tenor Alex Mansoori, and soprano Marcy Stonikas. Young Artists Eric Neuville, Vira Slywtozky, and Bray Wilkins are covering various roles. *Opera Goes to School* will visit Lawton Elementary School in Seattle from January 25 to 28, Cottonwood Elementary in Yakima from February 2 to 5, Lakeland Hills in Auburn from February 9 to 12, Saint Benedict's in Seattle from February 16 to 19, and Evergreen School in Shoreline from February 23 to 26. For more information about *Opera Goes to School* and all of Seattle Opera's educational programs visit www.seattleopera.org/discover/programs.

###

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.