



RING NEWS

For Release: August 16, 2005

Bad Fish Sinks Rhine Daughter,

Seattle Opera Finds Quick Covers for *Ring* Performance

Seattle—At the August 15, 2005, performance of Seattle Opera’s *Das Rheingold*, Associate Director Gina Lapinski and mezzo-soprano Sarah Heltzel filled in for mezzo-soprano Jennifer Hines, who was to have sung the role of Flosshilde, one of the Rhine Daughters. At 4:00 p.m., Hines called in violently ill from some fish she had eaten at lunch. A replacement for that evening’s performance had to be found quickly.

Finding a last-minute Rhine Daughter replacement presented a greater difficulty than usual. The Rhine Daughters in Seattle Opera’s production simulate swimming during the first scene of *Das Rheingold*: they fly in fitted harnesses from five feet off the ground to 30 feet in a carefully choreographed 18-minute scene. During the scene, Alberich, sung by baritone Richard Paul Fink, is desperately trying to catch them and falls over rocks as they swim close to him and then dart away. Hines’s part includes several moments where she descends to the fallen Fink and hovers over him horizontally, singing, making swimming motions, and teasing him. In order to do the scene properly, the three singers have rehearsed at least 100 hours; much of this time has been spent in the air.

The solution? To find one person to act the role of Flosshilde onstage and another to sing the role from the orchestra pit.

Gina Lapinski, an associate director to Stephen Wadsworth in the Seattle *Ring* and the person in charge of rehearsing the scene, played Hines’s part onstage. Lapinski is the same size as Hines and was able to wear Hines’s flying harness as well as her costume. She rehearsed the scene once with the other two Rhine Daughters (Woglinde, Wendy Hill and Wellgunde, Mary Phillips) before the 7:00 curtain and went on to enact the whole scene perfectly in performance, mouthing every word. “Not only did she do the actions,” said Wadsworth, “her depth of understanding of how the Rhine Daughters were supposed to think and feel

(over)

was complete.” Seattle Opera General Director Speight Jenkins added, “Gina’s actions stagger the imagination. It was as though she had done this scene a hundred times.”

Mezzo-soprano Sarah Heltzel, who sings Siegrune in tonight’s *Die Walküre*, sang Hines’s music from the pit. Heltzel was a Seattle Opera Young Artist last season and she is making her Seattle Opera mainstage debut in the *Ring*.

Hines is also a former Seattle Opera Young Artist; she participated in the program’s first season in 1998. Since then, she has become a regular artist at the New York City Opera, among other theaters. She reprises Flosshilde for her debut with Washington National Opera in March and tours Japan with the Metropolitan Opera’s *Ring* as an understudy in June. Hines has recovered from the food poisoning and is expected to sing Rossweisse in tonight’s performance as previously scheduled.

Lapinski is an assistant director at the Metropolitan Opera and has worked as director or assistant director for Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, and L’Opéra de Montréal, among others.

General Information on Seattle Opera’s *Ring*

Der Ring des Nibelungen, Seattle Opera, Summer 2005

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner.

In German with English Captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, Seattle, Washington

Ticket Information

Sold Out. Standing room only; SRO tickets (\$20 each opera) go on sale on the first day of each cycle.

| OPERA | CYCLE I | CYCLE II | CYCLE III |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <i>Das Rheingold</i> (7:00 p.m.) | (Sun) August 7 | (Mon) August 15 | (Tues) August 23 |
| <i>Die Walküre</i> (6:00 p.m.) | (Mon) August 8 | (Tues) August 16 | (Wed) August 24 |
| <i>Siegfried</i> (6:00 p.m.) | (Wed) August 10 | (Thurs) August 18 | (Fri) August 26 |
| <i>Götterdämmerung</i> (6:00 p.m.) | (Fri) August 12 | (Sat) August 20 | (Sun) August 28 |

Ring Production Team

Conductor: Robert Spano

Director: Stephen Wadsworth

Set Designer: Thomas Lynch

Costume Designer: Martin Pakledinaz

Lighting Designer: Peter Kaczorowski

Hair and Makeup Designer: Joyce Degenfelder (original designs in 2001 by Denise O'Brien)
Fire Designer and Flight Technical Director: Charles T. Buck
English Captions: Jonathan Dean

***Ring* Performing Artists**

Brünnhilde: Jane Eaglen
Wotan/The Wanderer: Greer Grimsley
Siegfried: Alan Woodrow
Alberich: Richard Paul Fink
Sieglinde/Third Norn: Margaret Jane Wray
Siegmund: Richard Berkeley-Steele
Hagen: Gidon Saks
Fricka/Second Norn: Stephanie Blythe
Erda/First Norn: Ewa Podles
Loge: Peter Kazaras
Fasolt/Hunding: Stephen Milling
Froh: Thomas Rolf Truhitte
Donner/Gunther: Gordon Hawkins
Mime: Thomas Harper
Fafner: Gidon Saks
Waltraute (*Götterdämmerung*): Nancy Maultsby
Freia/Ortlinde/Gutrune: Marie Plette
Woglinde/Forest Bird: Wendy Hill
Wellgunde: Mary Phillips
Siegrune: Sarah Heltzel†
Flosshilde/Rosswisse: Jennifer Hines†
Helmwige: Caroline Thomas
Gerhilde: Holly Hall
Waltraute (*Walküre*): Stacey Rishoi†
Grimgerde: Fredrika Brillembourg†
Schwertleite: Loretta Bybee
Bear: Steven Goldstein

† Seattle Opera debut

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Founded in 1963, Seattle Opera has developed into one of the leading opera companies in the United States. The company, which currently presents five productions a year, is recognized internationally for its theatrically compelling and musically accomplished performances. Seattle Opera's summer presentations, particularly of Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*, have been acclaimed often and widely as the Pacific Northwest's premier cultural events.

Seattle Opera is grateful to the following organizations for their steadfast major institutional support: ArtsFund, Bank of America, The Boeing Company, Classical KING FM 98.1, Charles E. Stuart Charitable Foundation, The James and Sherry Raisbeck Singers' Endowment, 4Culture, Kreielsheimer Foundation, Wallace Foundation, Microsoft Corporation, National Endowment for the Arts, Nesholm Family Foundation, PONCHO, City Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, Seattle Opera Guild, Sherman Clay Pianos, and Washington State Arts Commission. Seattle Opera is a participant in the Seattle Arts Stabilization Project, a joint venture of the Seattle Arts Stabilization Committee and the National Arts Stabilization Fund.

rg—8/16/05