



SEATTLE OPERA
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

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Seattle Opera Transforms Seattle into the “*Ring* City” with Month-long, Citywide *Ring* Cycle Events in August 2009

Tickets now on sale to Seattle Opera subscribers

**Tickets go on sale to the general public online on November 12, and in person or by
phone on November 15, 2008**

Seattle—Under the leadership of General Director Speight Jenkins, Seattle Opera has become known as “America’s Bayreuth,” drawing worldwide audiences to its acclaimed productions of all of Richard Wagner’s major works, especially sold-out performances of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, the composer’s cycle of four epic operas—*Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*. Seattle Opera’s last *Ring* cycle performances in 2005 drew audiences from 49 states and 19 countries and sold out many months in advance.

Seattle Opera and the City of Seattle are now making preparations for Seattle Opera’s next three *Ring* cycles, to take place from August 9 through 30, 2009. Tickets are currently on sale to Seattle Opera subscribers. Tickets go on sale online to the general public beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2008. Tickets for the general public will be available by phone or in person beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 15, 2008.

For the first time Seattle Opera will expand the activities surrounding its McCaw Hall performances of the *Ring* into the 21,000 square-foot Fisher Pavilion in Seattle Center, just steps from McCaw Hall. Among the events scheduled for Fisher Pavilion are Seattle Opera’s signature **Symposia**, where leading Wagner scholars and authors examine the complexities of the *Ring*. **Exploring the *Ring*** is a series of in-depth, three-hour seminars on each performance

day, hosted by international Wagner authority and lecturer Perry Lorenzo, the Education Director of Seattle Opera. Other Fisher Pavilion events include **Tech Talks** with the company's Technical and Facilities Director Robert Schaub, where he describes the special effects that enhance the productions. New for 2009 will be **Ring Fest Performances**: hour-long English adaptations of one or more of the *Ring* operas by singers from Seattle Opera's renowned Young Artists Program and *Ring* Fest participants.

Events scheduled for McCaw Hall include **Overtures to the Ring**—entertaining and informative introductions held an hour and a half before each performance, hosted by Education Artistic Administrator Jonathan Dean, and free post-performance **Q & A with Speight Jenkins** sessions in the Nesholm Family Lecture Hall. After each performance of *Das Rheingold*, there will be a **Rheingold Revelry Opening Night Celebration** in McCaw Hall—a champagne reception followed by a late supper—hosted by Speight Jenkins and attended by *Ring* artists.

Plans are already under way for these and other special events throughout the city. One eagerly awaited activity is the revival of **Das Barbecü**, a witty take on the *Ring* as a Texas fable, written by Seattle composer Scott Warrender and lyricist Jim Luigs to be presented by ACT—A Contemporary Theatre. The work, performed by five actors playing more than 30 outrageous characters, was originally commissioned by Seattle Opera in 1991 and has since had a successful off-Broadway run and has been performed in community theaters across the country. The proposed dates for *Das Barbecü* are July 31 through September 6, 2009. Six special performances will be reserved exclusively for Seattle Opera *Ring* attendees on August 11, 13, 19, 21, 27, and 29, 2009.

“I thought up the idea of *Das Barbecü* while talking to Scott Warrender in a Seattle park while we both were walking our dogs,” said General Director Speight Jenkins. “I never wanted a parody of the *Ring*—there are too many of those. I wanted a musical about what the *Ring* characters do when they are not onstage. Scott and Jim Luigs set the piece in Texas, and Scott wrote very tuneful, American music to a clever libretto. It has been a big hit all over the country and an even bigger hit when the audiences know the *Ring*. After a fourteen-year absence from Seattle, I am happy to welcome *Das Barbecü* back.”

The 2009 *Ring* cycle cast includes American soprano Janice Baird as Brünnhilde, Danish tenor Stig Andersen as Siegfried, and Australian tenor Stuart Skelton as Siegmund, all of whom are new to the production. Bass-baritone Greer Grimsley returns as Wotan/The Wanderer, a role that he first sang in the 2005 production and for which he won the Seattle Opera Artist of the Year award. Other returning singers are baritone Richard Paul Fink as Alberich, soprano Margaret Jane Wray as Sieglinde and the Third Norn, and mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe as Fricka, First Norn, and Waltraute (*Götterdämmerung*). Ms. Blythe previously sang Fricka and the Second Norn in all Seattle *Ring* performances since 2000.

The 2009 *Ring* is directed by Stephen Wadsworth, with sets designed by Thomas Lynch, costumes by Martin Pakledinaz, and lighting by Peter Kaczorowski. Robert Spano, music director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, who conducted his first *Ring* for the company in 2005, returns to Seattle Opera to conduct the 2009 performances.

Seattle has been recognized as the Wagner capital of America for more than a quarter of a century, producing one-week cycles of Wagner's *Ring* in the tradition of the Bayreuth Festival in Germany, which since 1876 has been the international shrine of Wagner productions. During his 25-year tenure, Speight Jenkins has created new productions of the composer's 10 canonical operas, including two new productions of the *Ring*.

Tickets

Tickets for the three 2009 *Ring* cycles are currently on sale to Seattle Opera subscribers and donors of \$100 or more to the *Ring* fund. Tickets will go on sale to the general public during an online presale beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2008. Tickets for the general public will be available by phone or in person beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 15, 2008. Seattle Opera's *Ring* cycles are among the most anticipated events in the Pacific Northwest.

***Der Ring Des Nibelungen* Performance Schedule – August 2009**

All performances take place at Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, Seattle, WA
Tickets: Cycle prices start at \$302 through \$1,508 for all four operas.
Seattle Opera Ticket Office: 206.389.7676, 800.426.1619, www.seattleopera.org

Cycle I

<i>Das Rheingold</i>	Sunday, August 9, 2009	7:00 p.m.
<i>Die Walküre</i>	Monday, August 10, 2009	6:00 p.m.
<i>Siegfried</i>	Wednesday, August 12, 2009	6:00 p.m.
<i>Götterdämmerung</i>	Friday, August 14, 2009	6:00 p.m.

Cycle II

<i>Das Rheingold</i>	Monday, August 17, 2009	7:00 p.m.
<i>Die Walküre</i>	Tuesday, August 18, 2009	6:00 p.m.
<i>Siegfried</i>	Thursday, August 20, 2009	6:00 p.m.
<i>Götterdämmerung</i>	Saturday, August 22, 2009	6:00 p.m.

Cycle III

<i>Das Rheingold</i>	Tuesday, August 25, 2009	7:00 p.m.
<i>Die Walküre</i>	Wednesday, August 26, 2009	6:00 p.m.
<i>Siegfried</i>	Friday, August 28, 2009	6:00 p.m.

Götterdämmerung Sunday, August 30, 2009 6:00 p.m.

Related *Ring* Events – August 2009

***Ring* Symposia**

Fisher Pavilion, Seattle Center

Admission: \$70 per symposium, including refreshments.

Leading Wagnerian scholars and music experts join Speight Jenkins and select *Ring* singers, to delve into the complexities of the *Ring*.

Cycle I Symposium

Tuesday, August 11, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Martin Bernheimer (author and critic)

Cycle II Symposium

Wednesday, August 19, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Stewart Spencer (writer)

William Berger (Producer, Met Quiz)

Cycle III Symposium

Thursday, August 27, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Anne Midgette (writer and critic)

Barry Millington (author and critic)

Bernard Jacobson (author and critic)

Overtures to the *Ring* with Jonathan Dean*

Nesholm Family Lecture Hall, McCaw Hall

Admission: \$32 for each cycle

Education Artistic Administrator Jonathan Dean sets the stage with an informative and entertaining introduction held an hour and a half before each performance.

Exploring the *Ring* with Perry Lorenzo

Fisher Pavilion, Seattle Center

Admission: \$96 for each cycle, including refreshments.

Seattle Opera Education Director Perry Lorenzo offers his insights into the themes, music, and historical context of all four operas in the *Ring* cycle. Exploring the *Ring* takes place from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. each performance day.

Rheingold* Revelry Opening Night Celebration

McCaw Hall

Admission: \$300—Champagne reception and late supper with a *Ring* artist at your table.

\$200—Champagne reception and late supper.

Special post-performance celebration marking the opening of each *Ring* cycle. Champagne reception followed by a late supper hosted by General Director Speight Jenkins and attended by *Ring* artists.

Q & A with Speight Jenkins*

Nesholm Family Lecture Hall, McCaw Hall
Admission: free for ticketholders.

Join General Director Speight Jenkins for a post-performance discussion immediately following the conclusion of *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*.

Tech Talks with Robert Schaub

Fisher Pavilion, Seattle Center
Admission: \$15

Technical Director Robert Schaub explains the stage magic and technical wizardry that goes into the creation of Seattle Opera's award-winning *Ring* production.

Cycle I

Thursday, August 13, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Cycle II

Friday, August 21, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Cycle III

Saturday, August 29, 2009, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

***Ring* Fest Performances**

Fisher Pavilion, Seattle Center
Admission: \$10

Die-hard *Ring* fans and local young people can share their enthusiasm for Wagner when the *Ring* Fest participants perform adaptations of one or more of the *Ring* Cycle operas. These hour-long English adaptations feature members of the company's Young Artists Program in principal roles, professional accompaniment on piano, and dozens of local grade-schoolers on stage and in the orchestra. Created by Seattle Opera's Education Department, these productions have been hits in schools throughout Washington in a one-of-a-kind blending of educational outreach, dynamic performance, and mutual appreciation that proves "Wagner is elementary."

Ring Fest Performance Session I

Thursday, August 13, 2009
2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Ring Fest Performance Session II

Friday, August 21, 2009
2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Das Barbecü – July 31 to September 6, 2009

ACT— A Contemporary Theatre

700 Union Street, Seattle, WA 98101

Admission: \$55 (available to Seattle *Ring* Cycle subscribers)

Tickets: 206.389.7676, 800.426.1619 or www.seattleopera.org

Wagner's *Ring* cycle is spun as a witty Texas fable with five actors playing more than 30 outrageous characters at breakneck speed. Songs run the gamut from Broadway and Texas swing to jazz and twangy country western. Mismatched lovers who meet on the day of their shotgun double wedding, three generations of feuding families, a magic ring of power, wild west lariat tricks, a synchronized swimming revue, a song and dance tribute to the joys of guacamole, and the sweetest two-step ever to slide across a stage add up to wild comedy. *Variety* wrote: "Your sides will ache by the end of the fast paced country western musical comedy," and *Hollywood Reporter* said: "Conjure up your basic Texas hootenanny, complete with lassos, long neck beers, fringed leather and steel guitars. Now, if you can, marry that image with Wagner's *Ring* Cycle, in all its operatic, melodramatic intensity. These improbable, no impossible, bedfellows come deliriously together in [this] splendidly giddy musical."

Das Barbecü will run from July 31 through September 6, 2009. The following dates are exclusive to Seattle Opera *Ring* ticketholders. (If seats remain after "Opera Buyouts," those dates will open up to the general public.)

Tuesday, August 11, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 13, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 19, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, August 21, 2009, 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, August 27, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 29, 2009, 8:00 p.m.

Tickets on sale March 2009 at the ACT Ticket Office (700 Union Street in Seattle), by calling (206) 292-7676, or at www.acttheatre.org

*These activities require attendance at the ticketed performance.

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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.