



SEATTLE OPERA
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

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Seattle Opera's RingFest Summer Program for Kids August 10-13 and August 18-21

Students perform kid-friendly adaptations of Wagner's *Ring*

Seattle—Seattle Opera is offering students an exciting summer opportunity to experience the company's signature production, Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*, through RingFest, a performing arts summer session. Scheduled to coincide with Seattle Opera's August production of Wagner's four-opera saga, RingFest gives students an opportunity to prepare and present a kid-friendly opera based on Wagner's spellbinding tale.

"The success of two hour-long adaptations of *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* with youngsters in the Seattle area underscores the immediate appeal of the *Ring* story," said General Director Speight Jenkins. "The *Ring*'s descendants, particularly *The Lord of the Rings*, prepare young people for an immersion in what I think is an even greater story, Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*. It has kept school audiences rapt and on the edge of their seats."

This summer's RingFest is a unique learning and performing opportunity for kids who enjoy singing, acting, or playing musical instruments. Students can register for either of two four-day sessions, during which they'll be exposed to both the onstage and the backstage aspects of creating an opera production. Throughout the week they will work with professional teaching artists on movement, singing, drumming, dialogue, and character development, and they will also create their own instruments, props, and costumes.

Introducing young people to opera can have a lasting impact, said Seattle Opera Education Director Perry Lorenzo, and the *Ring* is a wonderful place to start. “Learning about opera at an early age can change a person’s life—it changed mine,” Lorenzo said. “The *Ring* is the first opera I saw as a kid, and we want to make that same experience happen for as many students as possible.”

On the final day of each RingFest session, the students will present their opera to family, friends, and the die-hard *Ring* fans attending Seattle Opera’s mainstage productions. Other events surrounding this summer’s *Ring* include symposia and discussions with Wagner experts, Lorenzo’s pre-performance lectures, Tech Talks with Seattle Opera’s Technical Director Robert Schaub, and performances of *Das Barbecü*, a country-western *Ring* parody. These public RingFest performances will provide another opportunity for *Ring* fans and newcomers alike to experience the epic stories.

Parents have two options to register their students for RingFest. They can visit seattleopera.org/ringfest and download a registration form, or they can call 206.676.5567 to request that a form be mailed to them.

The two separate sessions run from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily during August 10 through 13 and August 18 through 21. The registration fee is \$250 per session. For more information on Seattle Opera’s educational programs, visit seattleopera.org/discover/programs.

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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. 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 operagoers from four continents, nineteen countries, and forty-nine states.