

For Release: February 1, 2005

Seattle Opera Announces 2005/06 Season:

Heggie's *End of the Affair*

Jonathan Miller's production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*

Johann Strauss, Jr.'s *Fledermaus*

With the Wagnerian trio of Eaglen, Woodrow, and Berkeley-Steele

New production of Verdi's *Macbeth*

Seattle—Seattle Opera's general director, Speight Jenkins, officially announced the company's 2005/06 season today. The season opens October 15, 2005, with American composer Jake Heggie's most recent—and newly revised—opera, *The End of the Affair*. In January, Seattle Opera presents Johann Strauss, Jr.'s ever-popular operetta, *Die Fledermaus*, featuring a trio of Wagnerians—soprano Jane Eaglen, tenor Alan Woodrow, and Richard Berkeley-Steele—in a comic turn. Jonathan Miller's production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* follows in February and March 2006. In May, the season concludes with a new production of Verdi's *Macbeth*, bringing together for the first time director Bernard Uzan and designer Robert Israel.

Since Seattle Opera will present Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* in the summer of 2005, the 2005/06 season is a four-opera subscription season rather than the customary five-opera season.

Among the artists making Seattle Opera **debut**s during the 2005/06 season are:

Composer: Jake Heggie (*The End of the Affair*)

Conductor: Nicola Luisotti (*Macbeth*)

Director: Leonard Foglia (*The End of the Affair*)

Set Designer: Michael McGarty (*The End of the Affair*)

Costume Designer: Jess Goldstein (*The End of the Affair*)

Lighting Designer: Donald Holder (*The End of the Affair*)

Sopranos: Sarah Coburn (Adele in *Die Fledermaus*), Alexandra Deshorties and Jessica Jones (Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Opening Night cast and Sunday/Friday cast respectively), Julie Makerov (Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Sunday/Friday cast), Dana Beth Miller (Sarah Miles in *The End of the Affair*, Sunday/Friday cast), and Elena Zelenskaya (Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Sunday/Friday cast)

Mezzo-Sopranos: Christine Rice and Maria Zifchak (Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Opening Night cast and Sunday/Friday cast respectively).

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Tenors: Joseph Calleja (Macduff in *Macbeth*), Don Frazure (Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Sunday/Friday cast), and Roger Honeywell (Gabriel von Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, Sunday/Friday cast)

Baritones: Zeljko Lucic (Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Sunday/Friday cast), James Bobick (Maurice Bendrix in *The End of the Affair*, Sunday/Friday cast), and Brett Polegato (Henry Miles in *The End of the Affair*)

Bass-Baritone: Valarian Ruminski (Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Sunday/Friday cast)

Bass: Burak Bilgili (Banquo in *Macbeth*)

*To learn more about the coming season, please see the attached letter from Speight Jenkins. For information on individual artists, check Seattle Opera's Web site: www.seattleopera.org/ and click on the **Artists** pages for each opera in the 2005/06 season.*

Seattle Opera Adds Sunday Matinee Series

For the first time in its history, Seattle Opera is offering two Sunday matinee series. The Opera's current Sunday matinee series has proved year in and year out to be the company's most popular. On many occasions, the Opera has been unable to accommodate the public's demand for Sunday tickets. By shifting the less popular second Friday Night series to a Sunday, Seattle Opera hopes to meet this demand and to bring in a greater number of newcomers to the opera.

Seattle Opera Ticket Information

Subscriptions go on sale to renewing subscribers February 1, 2005

Subscriptions go on sale to the general public February 14, 2005

4-Opera Subscription Ticket Prices: \$124 to \$3,052*

Seattle Opera Ticket Office: 206-389-7676/ 800-426-1619

Online Orders: www.seattleopera.org

All performances take place at Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., the matinees at 2:00 p.m.

* Prices include a \$2 per ticket facility fee and (in some locations) a preferred seating donation. This \$2 facility fee has been implemented in order to cover the capital costs of the opera house renovation that have not yet been funded.

Seattle Opera's 2005/06 Season

THE END OF THE AFFAIR

Music by Jake Heggie

Libretto by Heather McDonald, based on the novel by Graham Greene

In English with English Captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Eight Performances: October 15, 16m, 19, 22, 23m, 26, 28, 29, 2005

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours and 40 minutes with one intermission

Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinees at 2:00 p.m.

Premiere: Houston Grand Opera, March 4, 2004

Seattle Opera Premiere: October 15, 2005

Artists

Sarah Miles: Mary Mills/ Dana Beth Miller*†

Maurice Bendrix: Philip Cutlip/James Bobick*†

Henry Miles: Brett Polegato†

Mr. Parkis, a private detective: Robert Orth

Richard Smythe, a rationalist: Raymond Very†

Mrs. Bertram, Sarah's Mother: Joyce Castle

Conductor: Yves Abel

Director: Leonard Foglia†

Set Designer: Michael McGarty†

Costume Designer: Jess Goldstein†

Lighting Designer: Donald Holder†

English Captions: Thomas Young

Scenery & Costumes: From Houston Grand Opera

***On October 16, 23, 28, 2005 only**

†Company Debut

(over)

DIE FLEDERMAUS

Music by Johann Strauss, Jr.

Libretto by Carl Haffner and Richard Genée after Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy's *Réveillon*
In English with English Captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Nine Performances: January 14, 15m, 18, 20, 21, 22m, 25, 27, 28, 2006

Approximate Running Time: 3 hours and 15 minutes with two intermissions
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinees at 2:00 p.m.

Premiere: Vienna, Theater an der Wien, April 5, 1874

Previous Seattle Opera Presentations: September 1969, September 1981, May 1988, May 1999

Artists

Rosalinde: Jane Eaglen/Julie Makerov*†

Gabriel von Eisenstein: Richard Berkeley-Steele/Roger Honeywell*†

Adele: Sarah Coburn†

Dr. Falke: Christopher Feigum†

Alfred: Alan Woodrow

Prince Orlofsky: Nancy Maultsby

Frank: Patrick Carfizzi†

Dr. Blind: Doug Jones

Frosch: Grant Neale

Conductor: Gerard Schwarz

Director: Chris Alexander

Set Designer: Zack Brown

Costume Designer: Zack Brown

Lighting Designer: Robert Wierzel

Costumes: From Washington Opera

Scenery: Owned by Seattle Opera

***On January 15, 20, 22, 27, 2006 only**

†Company Debut

(over)

COSÌ FAN TUTTE

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte

In Italian with English Captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Eight Performances: February 25, 26m, March 1, 4, 5m, 8, 10, 11, 2006

Approximate Running Time: 3 hours and 17 minutes with one intermission

Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinees at 2:00 p.m.

Premiere: Vienna, January 26, 1790

Previous Seattle Opera Presentations: January 1974, January 1986, May 1992

Artists

Fiordiligi: Alexandra Deshorties†/Jessica Jones*†

Ferrando: Matthew Polenzani/Don Frazure*†

Dorabella: Christine Rice†/Maria Zifchak*†

Guglielmo: Christopher Maltman/David Adam Moore*

Despina: Kimberly Barber/Frances Lucey*

Don Alfonso: Richard Stilwell/Valarian Ruminski*†

Conductor: Andreas Mitisek

Director: Jonathan Miller

Production Designer: Jonathan Miller

Associate Costume Designer: Cynthia Savage

Lighting Designer: Neil Peter Jampolis

Scenery: Built by Seattle Opera

Costumes: Seattle Opera

***On February 26, March 5, 10, 2006 only**

†Company Debut

(over)

MACBETH

New Production

Music by Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, based on William Shakespeare's drama (revised version, with libretto translated by Charles-Louis-Etienne Nutter and Alexandre Beaumont)

In Italian with English Captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Eight Performances: May 6, 7m, 10, 13, 14m, 17, 19, 20, 2006

Approximate Running Time: 3 hours with two intermissions

Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., matinees at 2:00 p.m.

Premiere: Florence, Teatro della Pergola, March 14, 1847 (original version)

Paris, Théâtre Lyrique, April 21, 1865 (revised)

Previous Seattle Opera Presentation: January 1979

Artists

Macbeth: Gordon Hawkins/Zeljko Lucic*†

Lady Macbeth: Andrea Gruber/Elena Zelenskaya*†

Banquo: Burak Bilgili†

Macduff: Joseph Calleja†

Conductor: Nicola Luisotti†

Director: Bernard Uzan

Set Designer: Robert Israel

Costume Designer: Robert Israel

Lighting Designer: TBA

Scenery: By Seattle Opera

Costumes: By Seattle Opera

***On May 7, 14, 19, 2006 only**

†Company Debut

(over)

**Information About the 2005/06 Season is Provided on
Seattle Opera's Web Site
www.seattleopera.org**

Artists' biographies are provided under "Artists" in each opera section

For Season Press Releases
and
Press Photos to Download
Check www.seattleopera.org/news/

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Performances by Mary Mills, Jane Eaglen, Alexandra Deshorties, and Andrea Gruber are sponsored by the James and Sherry Raisbeck Singers' Endowment.

Seattle Opera's new production of Macbeth is made possible by Linda and Tom Allen.

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.

Letter from Speight Jenkins, Seattle Opera General Director

Dear Friends:

Welcome to Seattle Opera's 2005/06 season. It's a season as diverse as any we have presented, encompassing a period in the composition of opera from 1790 until 2004. Highlighting the breadth and depth of the art form, each opera on our mainstage has a decidedly different take on the world and reveals a different aspect of the human experience.

We begin with a contemporary work, but one very familiar to many of you in its earlier forms. In 1951, the great author Graham Greene wrote *The End of the Affair*, a novel of faith (or the absence thereof), which has been turned into two films. The first, with Deborah Kerr and Van Johnson, appeared in 1955; the second, with Julianne Moore and Ralph Fiennes, came out in 1999. The story has great appeal to everyone, particularly in this troublesome time in world history. Though the Nazi bombardment of London with V-2s in the latter days of the war is somewhat different from what terrorists do today, there is a similarity. No one knew where the bombs would hit; at the beginning, there was no protection against them and no warning.

Jake Heggie, the composer, came onto the opera scene with an extraordinarily successful version of another film: *Dead Man Walking*. His opera received its premiere at San Francisco Opera in 2000; it has since been presented at eight opera companies across America. Heggie's version of *The End of the Affair* received its premiere last season at Houston Grand Opera. I flew to Houston to hear the piece and was vastly impressed. I had screened the films beforehand and felt that Heggie's ability with music not only gave a fresh look to Greene's material but said more about the ultimate issues of faith and loss than did the films. It was among the fastest two hours I can remember in an opera house; I was totally engrossed.

Heggie composes tonal music with rewarding and memorable melodies. We will present the second version of *The End of the Affair*. After the premiere in Houston, Heggie rewrote some passages, including the ending and changed the order of the scenes. Even in its original version, I found it not only a work that fascinated me while I was in the theater, but one that has remained in my mind since. I am eager to present the work in Seattle.

Mary Mills, who first sang with Seattle Opera as Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* in 1997, will return as the heroine, Sarah. A beautiful young woman, Mills has sung extensively, mainly in the great European theaters, since her first appearances here. Sharing the role with Mills is Dana Beth Miller, who at Houston worked on the role of Sarah from the opera's inception. Bendrix, the man who loves Sarah, will be sung by Philip Cutlip, who sang Harlequin in last season's *Ariadne auf Naxos*. A

superb lyric baritone, he should bring vocal and dramatic power to this critical role. James Bobick, a fine American singer, will share the role of Bendrix. Robert Orth, a Seattle Opera Artist of the Year in 1993, returns as the detective. Several important debuts will occur in this cast: Brett Polegato, a Canadian baritone, sings Sarah's husband, and Raymond Very, a Met tenor, will sing the Rationalist. As Sarah's mother, Joyce Castle, who starred at Lincoln Center in Martha Clarke's sold-out *Belle Époque*, returns after too long a time away. Yves Abel, one of the world's most important young conductors, also returns, and the Broadway director Leonard Foglia, who directed the opera's world premiere, makes his Seattle Opera debut with this work.

In January, we bring back, after seven years, the most familiar of all operettas, Johann Strauss, Jr.'s *Fledermaus*—but with a new twist. The costumes and sets will be that of Vienna in 1879, but the cast is decidedly unusual. Since Jane Eaglen, Chris Alexander, and Gerard Schwarz had such a great collaboration last season in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, I thought it would be fun to put them together again in this classic champagne romp. It gives Eaglen a chance to show off her humor and her voice as she creates a heroic Rosalinde. To match her, we have two tenors, whom you will hear this summer in the *Ring*: Richard Berkeley-Steele, our Siegmund and a frequent Tannhäuser in Europe, will sing Eisenstein, and Alan Woodrow, our Siegfried this summer, will bring his remarkable talents to the role of Alfred. He has actually sung the part more than a few times at the English National Opera. One other member of the *Ring* cast will appear: Nancy Maultsby, our Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*, will play the trouser role of Prince Orlofsky. The cast is not all Wagnerian: the delightful lyric coloratura Sarah Coburn, a former Seattle Opera Young Artist who has scored major successes at several houses in the U.S. since leaving the program, will sing Rosalinde's maid, Adele, and Christopher Feigum, a fine lyric baritone, will play Dr. Falke, who starts the whole comedy in motion. Sharing the roles are Julie Makerov, an important and charming American soprano, who will sing Rosalinde to the Eisenstein of Roger Honeywell, who just won accolades for his performances in Strauss's *Daphne* at the New York City Opera.

The success that Alexander had with *Ariadne* made me want to bring him back as soon as possible in another comedy, and the idea of *Die Fledermaus* delighted him. The piece is devilishly hard to conduct, something not generally recognized; Schwarz has the feel of Vienna in his heritage and his heart. His reading of the great tunes of Strauss should brighten the January nights.

Some of you have complained to me about the absence of the works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart since our *Magic Flute* in 2000. With only five operas a season, it's hard to include every composer, but I agree that it has been too long since we heard Mozart at Seattle Opera. Our February/March opera will be the final collaboration between Mozart and Lorenzo da Ponte, *Così fan tutte*. Our last *Così* took place in 1991, and it reappears in a remarkable production.

Dr. Jonathan Miller, one of the world's most important directors, made his American name with a *Così* at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis in 1982. In 1995, he created a new production of *Così* for the Royal Opera at Covent Garden, and it was deemed one of his most successful. It was later presented at the Brooklyn Academy of Music to accolades from the New York press, and only last summer was given under the auspices of the Lincoln Center Festival in Manhattan. Seattle Opera, having planned to present the Miller *Così* here prior to the Lincoln Center Festival's performances, actually created the scenery for that engagement last summer. Every performance in Brooklyn and Manhattan sold out.

Those of you who anticipated our updating of *Rigoletto* this season with dread found it to be thrilling, or so the letters, e-mails, and personal communications tell me. If there ever was an opera that can be placed in any era, it's *Così fan tutte*. In Mozart's time, it was contemporary, and the story of two sets of lovers who test their constancy is as old as time and as fresh as what happens with young people everywhere. Mozart never composed a more breathtaking score, and da Ponte never created a better or more ambiguous libretto.

The cast brings to Seattle Opera attractive young singers as the four lovers. Alexandra Deshorties will make her local debut in that critical role as Fiordiligi (a role that she will sing in a new Met production premiering shortly before ours). Her mezzo sister Dorabella will serve as the U.S. debut role for a British artist, Christine Rice, who has received rave notices in the United Kingdom and Europe in the last few years. Matthew Polenzani, here as Rossini's Almaviva a few years ago, will sing Ferrando, while his counterpart, Guglielmo, will mark the return of Christopher Maltman, our remarkable Billy Budd in 2001. Despina, who contrives much of the comedy, will belong to Kimberly Barber, who has often appeared with Seattle Opera, and Richard Stilwell, one of the world's greatest Don Alfonsos, will play the cynical professor. Sharing the roles, we have again an outstanding complement of singers: Fiordiligi will be the fine American soprano Jessica Jones, with Maria Zifchak as a warm-voiced Dorabella and Frances Lucey as Despina. Don Frazure, a distinguished Mozart tenor, will perform the other Ferrando, with David Adam Moore, formerly a Seattle Opera Young Artist and recently in *The Girl of the Golden West*, as Guglielmo, and Valarian Ruminski as Don Alfonso.

Finally, we return to Verdi and to an opera not presented in Seattle since 1979, *Macbeth*. This great 1847 work precedes *Rigoletto* by four years and six operas. It's therefore early Verdi, yet it has in it some of his most eloquent music. The roles of Macbeth and his Lady are among the most challenging in the repertoire, both vocally and dramatically. The opera crackles with excitement and gives smaller but eloquent parts to the tenor Macduff and the bass Banquo. In the last century, Lady Macbeth proved to be a great part for Maria Callas and Leonie Rysanek, just to name two very different artists who made great successes interpreting her. *Macbeth* has been performed by such

artists as Leonard Warren, Cornell MacNeil, and Sherrill Milnes, all of whom triumphantly essayed Verdi's challenging music.

You will see a new production of this opera, designed by Robert Israel and directed by Bernard Uzan. In our cast, Andrea Gruber will return to Seattle Opera for her first Lady Macbeth, to the Macbeth of Gordon Hawkins, who has sung many Verdi parts here with great success. Two debuts will highlight both casts: Burak Bilgili, a prominent Turkish bass, will perform Banquo, and Joseph Callejo, an Italian tenor born on the island of Malta, will make his local debut as Macduff. Conducting is a new and important maestro, Nicola Luisotti, who will make his debut in these performances. Sharing the roles are the Russian soprano Elena Zelenskaya, who makes her Northwest debut as the Lady, and the very important Croatian baritone Zeljko Lucic, who will sing Macbeth. I first heard Lucic in Frankfurt and feel that he is one of the most important of the younger Verdi baritones singing today.

We have a very diverse repertoire and great casts, conductors, and directors set to bring each of the operas to vibrant life. I hope that you will join us as a subscriber next season. It will be a great season, with something for everyone—one very popular opera, great pieces by Mozart and Verdi, and a really accessible and fascinating contemporary work. We will do our best to be worthy of your confidence in Seattle Opera and to give you four great productions that will enhance the enjoyment of your operagoing experience.

Sincerely,

Speight Jenkins
General Director