



SEATTLE OPERA
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

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**Despite Difficult Economy,
Balanced Budget for Seattle Opera in 2009/10
Company Finishes \$10 Million Artistic Campaign
and Announces Future Innovation Initiative**

**Kate Lindsey and Stephen Wadsworth
Named
Seattle Opera Artists of the Year**

**Seattle Opera Honors Gardner McFall, Daron Aric Hagen,
and Stephen Wadsworth with Seattle Opera Chairman's Award**

Dr. William T. Weyerhaeuser Elected Seattle Opera Board President

Seattle—On Tuesday, August 3, at Seattle Opera's Annual Meeting at McCaw Hall, the company announced that it expects to achieve a balanced budget for the 2009/10 season, no mean feat in today's difficult economy. The budget for the season—which included the *Ring* cycle, three Verdi operas, three Young Artists productions, and *Amelia*, a world premiere opera—totaled over \$30 million. Total expenses for the season (unaudited) are projected to be under \$28 million.

“In every respect, last season was a *tour de force* of planning and execution; the season tested every aspect of our planning and execution abilities,” says Board President Steven C. Phelps.

“Therefore, it is with the deepest respect and admiration for our Board, for the company and its leadership, for our donors, and for our wonderful audience, that I announce that, for the season just ended, Seattle Opera once again balanced its budget.”

When it became clear that revenue from ticket sales and donations would not meet goals set before the recession began, Seattle Opera embarked on a careful planning process to prioritize expenses and cut back where possible, following the mandate, set by the General Director, that maintaining the company's high musical standards must be top priority.

Seattle Opera's 2009/10 budget benefited from the lack of any accumulated deficit, as well as ticket revenue for the *Ring* and *Amelia* that exceeded expectations. In addition, over the course of the season the company reduced expenses well in excess of \$2 million, through measures such as:

- Salary freeze for all employees, including all members of all collective bargaining agreements
- Reorganized and reduced positions, and vacant positions left unfilled
- Administrative efficiencies, including reducing operations budget
- For *Il trovatore*, set rental compatible with Seattle Opera-owned costumes
- For *Falstaff*, recreated for the mainstage Seattle Opera's 2007 Young Artists Program production

Also contributing to the 2009/10 season's balanced budget were reserve funds from the company's five-year, \$10 million dollar Artistic Campaign, which will be entirely spent, as planned, by the end of the 2010/11 season. Because this Artistic Campaign is now in the last of its five years, the Seattle Opera Board's Financial Task Force has spent the last year studying the current economic environment, looking at the company's goals for the future, and strategizing what will come next. "The result of this work was to recommit to the artistic excellence we have come to expect under Speight's leadership while committing to new ways of thinking that reflect these turbulent times," says Board Chairman John Nesholm.

Coming into focus is something that has always been at the heart of Seattle Opera: innovation. It was Richard Wagner's advice to those who produced his works: "Kinder, schafft neues!" (Children, make it new!) At home in a city that has changed the way we look at aircraft, technology, books, and coffee, Seattle Opera is changing the way opera is experienced both on the stage and throughout our community. Seattle Opera has innovated to make the epic works of Wagner contagiously exciting, has masterminded collaborations with organizations such as the

Goodwill Games and The Metropolitan Opera, and has made opera a must-have in elementary schools across the state. Even when other opera companies retrenched, Seattle Opera brought to the stage *Amelia*, one of the most original and powerful operas to be commissioned so far in this century. The current production of *Tristan und Isolde* features an intriguing new way of understanding the opera, as well as projections incorporated into the production design in an innovative way. “Seattle Opera’s newly launched **Innovation Initiative** will be the vehicle by which new thinking will be carried into the future,” says Nesholm.

Artists of the Year

Also announced at Tuesday’s meeting, the company’s 2009/10 Artists of the Year awards went to **Kate Lindsey** for creating the role of Amelia in Daron Aric Hagen’s *Amelia* in May 2010, and to **Stephen Wadsworth**, stage director for *Der Ring des Nibelung* in August 2009 and for *Amelia* in 2010.

“Kate is the youngest artist ever to win this significant award, and the honor is more than well-deserved” said Speight Jenkins, General Director of Seattle Opera. “Her performance as Amelia, including her intense preparation, represents an ideal for young American artists.”

“Winning the Artist of the Year for the second time is a remarkable feat but not surprising for a director who has accomplished so much for Seattle Opera as Stephen Wadsworth. His *Ring* has delighted audiences for almost ten years, and his work on *Amelia* dramatically showed his ability to envision contemporary situations.”

A graduate of the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artists Program, Lindsey, whose performance as Amelia was called “Subtly charismatic, vocally warm and lovely” by the New York Times, “Superb” by the Financial Times, and “Stunningly good” by the Seattle Times, is currently performing Nicklausse in *Les contes d’Hoffmann* and Nancy in *Albert Herring* for Santa Fe Opera. She plays Nicklausse at the Met this fall before returning to Seattle for Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

Wadsworth, who also won Seattle Opera’s Artist of the Year for his staging of Wagner’s *Ring* in 2001, began his association with Seattle Opera directing Janáček’s *Jenůfa* in 1985; other productions for the company include Gluck’s *Orphée et Eurydice* and *Iphigénie en Tauride*,

Handel's *Xerxes*, and Wagner's *Lohengrin*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and the complete *Ring* (in 2001, 2005, 2009, and returning in 2013), and *Amelia*. The Seattle Times called his 2009 *Ring* stage direction "richer than ever, underscoring the human drama of the plot with believable, imaginative action." Of his work on *Amelia*, the Wall Street Journal said "Mr. Wadsworth's subtle and incisive directing made the opera's multiple levels and interactions absolutely clear, communicating the story's emotional weight without allowing it to slip into sentimentality."

In 1991, Seattle Opera's Artist of the Year award was created to honor the individual singer, conductor, director, or designer who had made the most significant contribution to the success of the season. At the conclusion of the 2003/04 season, Seattle Opera began honoring two Artists of the Year for each season: one a conductor, director, or designer; the other a singer. Participating in the selection process of Seattle Opera's Artists of the Year are members of Seattle Opera's Board of Trustees, Diamond Level and Platinum Circle donors, and staff, as well as selected members of the local press. This is the company's twentieth annual selection of Artist of the Year.

Chairman's Award

Board Chairman John Nesholm announced during the meeting that the Seattle Opera Chairman's Award goes to the creative team of *Amelia*, the first world premiere opera presented at Seattle Opera under the leadership of Speight Jenkins: Librettist Gardner McFall, Composer Daron Aric Hagen, and Story Creator Stephen Wadsworth. Says Nesholm, "This extraordinary team gave us a new opera that spoke powerfully and movingly about the complex tensions between the promise and the danger of flying, one's duty to country, honor, and familial love, all told within the context of one of the most significant periods in our recent history. We are extraordinarily grateful to Gardner, Daron and Stephen for their work with us and the legacy they leave to the world of opera." The Chairman's Award was created in 2008 to recognize and honor those who have given exceptional support to Seattle Opera. The unique glass and copper award was designed and handcrafted by Seattle Opera's Scenic Studios.

Board of Trustees News

Seattle Opera's 2010/11 Board of Trustees was elected at the Annual Meeting. Dr. William T. Weyerhaeuser replaces Steven C. Phelps as President of the Board. A Board Member since 2007, Weyerhaeuser has served as a director of several companies and foundations, including the University of Puget Sound and Columbia Banking Systems, Inc. Weyerhaeuser says of Seattle

Opera, “Over the next several years, we face known challenges and as yet unknown challenges. Challenge is hardly new to this company, and what I know about its history suggests that the Board and staff and its devoted supporters working together have always found a way to prevail. Given that same spirit, I am confident that we will continue to do so in the future.”

Other newly elected Seattle Opera Board Trustees include Jonathan Caves, Robert Comfort, Mohammad Yahyavi, and Evelyn Zabo.

Biographies of 2009/10 Artists of the Year

Kate Lindsey made her Seattle Opera debut in the title role in Daron Aric Hagen’s *Amelia*, and returns next season as Rosina in Rossini’s *Barber of Seville*. A graduate of the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, Lindsey’s roles with the Met have included Nicklausse in Offenbach’s *Contes d’Hoffmann*, Cherubino in Mozart’s *Nozze di Figaro*, Wellgunde in Wagner’s *Ring*, Stéphano in Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette*, and Siébel in Gounod’s *Faust*. Recent engagements include Cherubino and Rosina at Bayerische Staatsoper. Currently, she is singing Nancy in Britten’s *Albert Herring* and Nicklausse with Santa Fe Opera. After upcoming engagements at the Met and Seattle, she will perform Zaida in Rossini’s *Turco in Italia* in Los Angeles and Idamante in Mozart’s *Idomeneo* at Théâtre des Champs Élysées.

Stephen Wadsworth has a 25-year association with Seattle Opera beginning with Janáček’s *Jenůfa* (1985) and continuing with Gluck’s *Orphée et Eurydice* and *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Handel’s *Xerxes*, and Wagner’s *Lohengrin*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and the complete *Ring* (in 2001, 2005, 2009, and returning in 2013), and *Amelia*, for which he was both a member of the creative team (story author) and director. Wadsworth has directed productions for the Metropolitan Opera (*Rodelinda*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*), Teatro alla Scala, Royal Opera Covent Garden, and Vienna Staatsoper, among others; he recently directed the world premiere of Anna Deavere Smith’s *Let Me Down Easy* and of Terrence McNally’s *Master Class* with Tyne Daly at the Kennedy Center. His productions of plays by Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Molière, Marivaux, Goldoni, Shaw, Wilde, and Coward have established him as a master of the classical repertoire. Wadsworth wrote the opera *A Quiet Place* with Leonard Bernstein, served as dramaturg and director for the world premieres of Daron Aric Hagen’s *Shining Brow* and Peter Lieberman’s

Ashoka's Dream, and has translated and adapted a number of works for the stage. He was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government for his work on Molière and Marivaux. An artist-in-Residence at the Aspen Institute, Wadsworth is also the James S. Marcus Faculty Fellow and Director of Opera Studies at The Juilliard School and Head of Dramatic Studies at the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artists Development Program.

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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. 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, 22 countries, and 50 states.