



SEATTLE OPERA
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

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Press Contacts: Hilda Cullen, 206.676.5543, hilda.cullen@seattleopera.org

Rosemary Jones, 206.676.5559, rosemary.jones@seattleopera.org

Visuals Contact: Monte Jacobson, 206.676.5545, monte.jacobson@seattleopera.org

Theft of the Gold: The Ring Begins

Grade-School Children in Auburn, Bellevue, Shoreline, Seattle, and Yakima Perform with Seattle Opera Young Artists in an Original Adaptation of Wagner's *Rheingold*

Seattle—Seattle Opera's 2007 Opera Goes to School program starts this week with performances of *Theft of the Gold: The Ring Begins* in Yakima and Shoreline. This adaptation of Wagner's *Rheingold* was created by Seattle Opera Education Artistic Administrator Jonathan Dean and was presented last season at schools through the Puget Sound region.

The teaching artists of the company's *Opera Goes to School* program work with third, fourth, and fifth graders in a four-day workshop, teaching them how to perform in a real opera. The workshop encompasses all aspects of opera, including acting, singing, theatrical movement, and orchestra. Each workshop culminates in a performance for their school.

Professional opera singers from the Seattle Opera Young Artists Program perform the lead roles of Wagner's gods and goddesses in *Theft of the Gold*, while the children play Nibelung dwarves and Nature spirits or perform accompaniment in the orchestra directed by Father Rhine.

Seattle Opera Young Artists Caitlin Lynch, Ani Maldjian, Teresa Herold, David Lara, Joshua Jeremiah, and Marcus Shelton will perform *Theft of the Gold* with the students at The Evergreen School in Shoreline (February 2), Stevenson Elementary in Bellevue (February 8 and 9), and Viewlands Elementary in Seattle (February 15).

Noah Baetge, Holly Boaz, Anya Matanovic, Julia Benzinger, Jonathan Lasch, and Michael McGee will perform *Theft of the Gold* with the students at Cottonwood Elementary in Yakima (February 1), Pioneer Elementary in Auburn (February 16), and St. Benedict's in Seattle (February 23).

Producing 250 events and activities each year, Seattle Opera's Education Department is among the largest and most active of its type among arts organizations in the country. In the Education Department's Opera Goes to School program, professional Teaching Artists, singers from the Young Artists Program, and Education Department staff work with grade-school students and teachers to introduce them to the art form.

Opera Goes to School is now in its sixth season. Previous projects include *Magic Flute: A Hero's Quest*, an adaptation of Mozart's *Zauberflöte*, which was later recorded (featuring the voices of Seattle Opera Young Artists) and released on CD by Starbucks.

Theft of the Gold: The Ring Begins is made possible through the support of the Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences, The Clowes Fund, Inc., The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Peach Foundation, The Herman Lissner Foundation, U.S. Trust Corporation Foundation, Amgen, Inc., U.S. Bancorp Foundation, Bank of America, and PONCHO. *Theft of the Gold: The Ring Begins* is dedicated to the memory of the late Gertrude E. Sprenger.

For press and photographer access to these performances, please contact Hilda Cullen, Director of Public Relations, at 206.676.5543 or hilda.cullen@seattleopera.org.

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