



SEATTLE OPERA
SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

NEWS

Seattle Opera Young Artists Maria D'Amato And Michael Todd Simpson Sing For Mariners' Opening Day

Seattle—Two members of Seattle Opera's Young Artists Program, soprano Maria D'Amato and baritone Michael Todd Simpson, will sing the National Anthem for the Mariners' Opening Day game against the Anaheim Angels, April 6, 2004.

D'Amato and Simpson star in Seattle Opera's Young Artists' production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center, Bellevue. The opera opens April 2 and runs through April 10, 2004.

In 2003, the Seattle Opera Chorus sang the National Anthem for the house opener, and other visiting artists for Seattle Opera productions sang the National Anthem for approximately 20 more games last season.

Seattle Opera's long run at SAFECO Field began in 1999, when soprano Deborah Voigt and tenor Gary Lakes opened the ballpark with the National Anthem. In 2001, tenor Alan Woodrow joined the Mariners three times during their playoff run. Baritone Richard Paul Fink opened the 2002 season, and other visiting artists from Seattle Opera productions stepped up to the plate for ten more games in the 2002 season. International opera star Jane Eaglen, last seen here in Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, often sings the National Anthem for the Seattle Mariners, her favorite baseball team.

Seattle Opera General Director Speight Jenkins will accompany D'Amato and Simpson to SAFECO Field. Jenkins, an enthusiastic Mariners fan and season ticket holder, attends as many home games as his schedule allows.

More than 600 singers applied to enter Seattle Opera's 2003/04 Young Artists Program, but only 12 singers were accepted into the program in early September. The Young Artists Program provides training to singers in their mid-20s and early 30s in all aspects of a career in opera. The program, now in its sixth year, concludes each spring with a fully staged opera in Bellevue and, one week later, a concert version of the opera with the Yakima Symphony.

D'Amato sings the role of Despina in *Così fan tutte*. She holds a bachelor of music degree from Boston University and a master of music degree from Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, (CCM). While in Cincinnati, D'Amato sang the roles of Despina, Sarah Good in Ward's *Crucible*, and Molly Picon in the world premiere of Hoffmann's *The Memory Game*. As a young artist with Opera North in 2002, she performed the roles of Poppea and Drusilla in Monteverdi's *Incoronazione di Poppea*.

Simpson sings the role of Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*. He came to Seattle from the Glimmerglass Opera Young American Artists Program. A graduate of Erskine College, Simpson also earned his master of music degree from CCM, where his roles included Figaro in Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro* and William Jennings Bryan in Moore's *Ballad of Baby Doe*. Simpson has sung in two productions with Cincinnati Opera, including the role of Paris in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* and the role of Inmate #3 in Hegie's *Dead Man Walking*.

The Mariners' home opener against the Anaheim Angels begins at 2:05 p.m. at SAFECO Field, April 6, 2004. The National Anthem will be sung at 1:55 p.m., with pre-game festivities beginning approximately one half-hour before the opening.

(over)

Seattle Opera's Young Artists Opera: Mozart's *Così fan tutte*

6 Performances: April 2, 3, 4 (matinee), 9, 10 (matinee), 10 (evening), 2004

Evening Performances: 7:00 p.m.

Matinees: 2:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$28 for adults and \$15 for students

Ticket Information: 206-389-7676

Performed at the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, Washington

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Founded in 1963, Seattle Opera has developed into 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 dedicates its inaugural season in the new Marion Oliver McCaw Hall to Dorothy Priscilla "Patsy" Bullitt Collins.

Seattle Opera is grateful to the following organizations for their steadfast major institutional support: ArtsFund, Bank of America, The Boeing Company, Beethoven/Classical KING FM 98.1, Charles E. Stuart Charitable Foundation, The James and Sherry Raisbeck Singers' Endowment, King County Cultural Development Authority, Kreielsheimer Foundation, Microsoft Corporation, National Endowment for the Arts, Nesholm Family Foundation, PONCHO, Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, Seattle Opera Guild, Sherman Clay Pianos, The Wallace Foundation, 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. 4/1/04