

SEATTLE OPERA

SPEIGHT JENKINS GENERAL DIRECTOR

PRESS RELEASE

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Seattle Opera Announces 2014/15 Season

Celebration of Speight Jenkins and Company's 50th Anniversary Kicks Off the Year

Operas Include Don Giovanni, Tosca, Semele and Ariadne auf Naxos

***Award-winning Singers Include Lawrence Brownlee, Greer Grimsley,
Stephanie Blythe and Kate Lindsey***

SEATTLE—From the depths of hell to the heights of paradise, the four great operas of Seattle Opera's 2014/15 season will take operagoers on a fantastic journey. During this important season, leadership will pass from Speight Jenkins, who has been General Director of Seattle Opera for a remarkable 31 years, to Aidan Lang, who was announced as Jenkins' successor in June, 2013.

"Moving from one of Handel's greatest operas to Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, with casts including some of your favorite singers, the 2014/15 season should be one to remember," Jenkins said.

"Although the season has been planned and cast by me, it will be produced by Aidan Lang. I am confident that you will see and enjoy his managerial hand."

Following Jenkins' final opera—*The Tales of Hoffmann*, in May 2014—the company will honor his three decades of leadership with a celebratory weekend in August. On August 7, Seattle Opera presents its third International Wagner Competition. In an all-Wagner concert conducted by Sebastian Lang-Lessing, eight finalists and two alternates will compete for two prizes of \$25,000, to be awarded by a distinguished panel of judges. The audience and orchestra will also play an important role in the competition; both groups will award a prize of \$5,000 to their favorite artist. The Speight Celebration Concert and Dinner follows on August 9, 2014. Many of Seattle Opera's best-loved singers, including Greer Grimsley,

Stephanie Blythe, William Burden, Francesco Demuro, and Christiane Libor, will join the Seattle Opera Chorus and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra in concert at McCaw Hall to pay tribute to Jenkins. Tickets to the competition and concert are now available to the public.

The 2014-2015 subscription season of four operas officially begins in the fall. The season offers subscribers a healthy variety of comedy, tragedy, reality, and fantasy, in a mix of different musical styles and languages.

Kicking things off is Mozart's multifaceted portrait of an unrepentant Casanova: *Don Giovanni*. Since first fascinating audiences at its 1787 premiere, this masterpiece continues to be opera's ultimate cautionary tale about the human cost of unbridled lust. French bass **Nicolas Cavallier** returns to Seattle as the dangerously charming title character. **Lawrence Brownlee**, Seattle Opera's Artist of the Year for 2008, returns for his first mainstage Mozart role at Seattle Opera as Don Ottavio. **Elizabeth Caballero** and **Christine Brandes** share the role of Donna Elvira, with **Erin Wall** and **Alexandra LoBianco** making their respective Seattle Opera debuts as Donna Anna. **Gary Thor Wedow** conducts a stylish production, first created by Seattle Opera in 2007. **Chris Alexander** directs, with costumes by **Marie-Therese Cramer** and sets by **Robert Dahlstrom**.

The New Year sees the return of two other favorite Seattle Opera productions, plus a company premiere:

In January 2015 comes *Tosca*, Puccini's crowd-pleasing masterpiece about a fiery diva, an idealistic painter, and a corrupt police chief. Two stellar sopranos, **Ausrine Stundyte** (opening night) and **Mary Elizabeth Williams** (alternate cast), return to Seattle to sing the title role; Stundyte wowed Seattle as Cio-Cio-San in 2012, and Williams won Artist of the Year for her Serena in *Porgy and Bess* in 2011. The production also stars tenor **Stefano Secco** as Mario Cavaradossi and features the return of Seattle favorite and Artist of the Year winner (for Wotan in the 2005 *Ring*) **Greer Grimsley** as the power-mad Baron Scarpia. The production will be directed by **Jose Maria Condemni**.

Next, Handel's sensuous and sparkling charmer, *Semele*, comes to Seattle Opera for the first time. An unsophisticated but ambitious young woman leaves her origins behind in an attempt to enter the rarified realm of the "beautiful people." Seattle Opera's elegant, all-new production stars the incomparable mezzo-soprano **Stephanie Blythe**, Artist of the Year winner for 2009, as Juno, the goddess bent on teaching the interloper a lesson. Making their Seattle Opera debuts are tenor **Alek Shrader** as Jupiter, Juno's philandering husband, and soprano **Brenda Rae** as Semele, the vain mortal woman he loves. **John Del Carlo** returns in the double role of Cadmus and Somnus. Seattle Opera Young Artists alumni **Dana Pundt**, **Theo Lebow** and **Deborah Nansteel** return in the alternate cast. **Tomer Zvulun** directs this

Seattle Opera premiere, a new Seattle Opera production with scenery designed by **Erhard Rom** and costumes by **Vita Tzykun**. **Gary Thor Wedow** returns to conduct.

The season concludes with the return of Seattle Opera's hit production of Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, which amazed audiences at its premiere with a minute-long sequence of indoor fireworks. **Kate Lindsey** (Artist of the Year winner for 2010) as the high-strung Composer and **Sarah Coburn** as the flirtatious **Zerbinetta** find that true love really does have a transformative effect. **Sarah Larsen** and debuting soprano **Haeran Hong** sing these roles in the second cast. Soprano **Christine Libor** returns as Prima Donna/Ariadne, with **Marcy Stonikas** taking the role in the alternate cast. Tenors **Arnold Rawls** and **Ric Furman**, as Tenor/Bacchus, give the abandoned Ariadne a new reason to live. **Lawrence Renes** conducts and **Chris Alexander** directs a production which won him the Artist of the Year Award for 2004, with sets by **Robert Dahlstrom** and costumes by **Cynthia Savage** and **Bruno Schwengl**.

To learn more about the 2014/15 season, including ticket information and full artist biographies (with audio excerpts of principal singers) visit seattleopera.org/operas. Following are fact sheets and ticket information.

INTERNATIONAL WAGNER COMPETITION and SPEIGHT CELEBRATION CONCERT & DINNER

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

August 7, 2014: International Wagner Competition, 7:00 p.m.

August 9, 2014: 50th Anniversary Concert and Speight Celebration, 6:00 p.m.

International Wagner Competition

The world will be watching as an elite group of up-and-coming Wagnerians take the stage for Seattle Opera's third International Wagner Competition. In an all-Wagner concert conducted by Sebastian Lang-Lessing, eight finalists and two alternates will compete for two prizes of \$25,000, to be awarded by a distinguished panel of judges. The audience and orchestra will also play an important role in the competition; both groups will award a prize of \$5,000 to their favorite artist. Ticket prices start at \$46.

The finalists are:

Ric Furman, tenor
Suzanne Hendrix, mezzo-soprano
Roman Ialcic, bass baritone
Kihun Yoon, baritone
Tamara Mancini, soprano
Kevin Ray, tenor
Issachah Savage, tenor
Marcy Stonikas, soprano

The alternates are:

David Danholt, tenor
Helena Dix, soprano

Lead Sponsor: Nesholm Family Foundation

Orchestra Choice Prize Sponsor: Betty and Jack Schafer

Audience Choice Prize Sponsor: Wagner and More

Speight Celebration Concert & Dinner

This very special concert celebrates the 31-year tenure of General Director Speight Jenkins and Seattle Opera's 50th Anniversary. Accompanied by The Seattle Opera Chorus and members of The Seattle Symphony, several of the company's most beloved performers will serenade Jenkins and his most loyal supporters at this once-in-a-lifetime event.

Scheduled to appear:

Stephanie Blythe, William Burden, Francesco Demuro, Nuccia Focile, Clifton Forbis, Greer Grimsley, Gordon Hawkins, Christiane Libor, Kate Lindsey, Alwyn Mellor, Antonello Palombi, Brett Polegato, Peter Rose, Mary Elizabeth Williams, Arthur Woodley. Sebastian Lang-Lessing and Carlo Montanaro will conduct. Joyce Castle will emcee the event.

Donors and subscribers will receive priority seating privileges. Concert tickets start at \$99.

Co-chairs: Lyn and Jerry Grinstein and Laurel and John Nesholm

Table Sponsors
Angel Table

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Ann P. Wykoff

Gold Table

Maryanne Tagney and David Jones

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Seattle Opera's 2014/15 Season

DON GIOVANNI

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte

In Italian with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Performances: October 18 – November 1, 2014

Approximate Running Time: 3 hours and 20 minutes, with one intermission

Evening performances begin at 7:30 pm, matinee at 2:00 pm

Premiere: Teatro di Praga (now called the Estates Theatre) on October 29, 1787

Previous Seattle Opera Performances: 1968, 1979, 1991, 1999, 2007

Artists

Don Giovanni:	Nicolas Cavallier Mark Walters † *
Donna Anna:	Erin Wall † Alexandra LoBianco † *
Donna Elvira:	Elizabeth Caballero Christine Brandes *
Zerlina:	Cecelia Hall
Don Ottavio:	Lawrence Brownlee Randall Bills †*
Leporello:	Erik Anstine Ashraf Sewailam *
Commendatore:	Jordan Bisch
Masetto:	Evan Boyer †
Conductor:	Gary Thor Wedow
Stage Director:	Chris Alexander
Set Designer:	Robert Dahlstrom
Costume Designer:	Marie-Therese Cramer
Lighting Designer:	Duane Schuler
Sets & Costumes:	Seattle Opera

† Seattle Opera debut

* October 19 and 31 only

Production Sponsors: Maryanne Tagney and David Jones

Erik Anstine and Lawrence Brownlee are graduates of Seattle Opera's Young Artists Program.

TOSCA

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Luigi Illica & Giuseppe Giacosa

In Italian with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Performances: January 10 – 24, 2015

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours and 50 minutes with two intermissions

Evening performances begin at 7:30 pm, matinee at 2:00 pm

Premiere: Teatro Costanzi, Rome on January 14, 1900

Previous Seattle Opera Performances: 1964, 1969, 1977, 1986, 1993, 2001, 2008

Artists

Floria Tosca:	Ausrine Stundyte Mary Elizabeth Williams *
Mario Cavardossi:	Stefano Secco Adam Diegel †*
Baron Scarpia:	Greer Grimsley Sebastian Holecek †*

Conductor:	Julian Kovatchev
Stage Director:	Jose Maria Condemi

Sets & Costumes:	Seattle Opera
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† Seattle Opera debut

* January 11 and 23 only

Production Sponsors: Lenore M. Hanauer, Richard R. and Constance M. Albrecht

Mary Elizabeth Williams is a graduate of Seattle Opera's Young Artists Program.

SEMELE

Music by George Frideric Handel

Libretto by William Congreve

In English with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Performances: February 21 – March 7, 2015

Approximate Running Time: 3 hours and 30 minutes, with two intermissions

Evening performances begin at 7:30 pm, matinee at 2:00 pm

Premiere: Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, London on February 10, 1744

Seattle Opera Premiere

Artists

Semele:	Brenda Rae † Dana Pundt *
Jupiter/Apollo:	Alek Shrader † Theo Lebow *
Ino/Juno:	Stephanie Blythe Deborah Nansteel *
Athamas:	Randall Scotting †
Cadmus/Summos:	John Del Carlo
Iris:	Amanda Forsythe †
Conductor:	Gary Thor Wedow
Stage Director:	Tomer Zvulun
Scenery Designer:	Erhard Rom
Costume Designer:	Vita Tzykun †
Lighting Designer:	Robert Wierzel
Sets & Costumes:	Seattle Opera

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† Seattle Opera debut

* February 22 and March 6 only

Production Sponsors: Kreielsheimer Endowment Fund

Theo Lebow, Deborah Nansteel, and Dana Pundt are graduates of Seattle Opera's Young Artists Program.

ARIADNE AUF NAXOS

Music by Richard Strauss

Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal

In German with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

Performances: May 2 – 16, 2015

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours and 33 minutes with one intermission

Evening performances begin at 7:30 pm, matinee at 2:00 pm

Premiere: Hoftheater, Stuttgart, on October 25, 1912

Previous Seattle Opera Performances: 1991, 2004

Artists

Prima Donna/Ariadne: Christiane Libor
Marcy Stonikas *

Tenor/Bacchus: Arnold Rawls
Ric Furman *

Zerbinetta: Sarah Coburn
Haeran Hong †*

Composer: Kate Lindsey
Sarah Larsen *

Music Master/Truffaldino: Patrick Carfizzi
Harlekin: Andrew Garland

Conductor: Lawrence Renes
Stage Director: Chris Alexander
Set Designer: Robert A. Dahlstrom
Costume Designer: Cynthia Savage
Lighting Designer: Robert Wierzel
Hair and Makeup Designer: Joyce Degenfelder

Sets & Costumes: Seattle Opera

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† Seattle Opera debut

* May 3 and 15 only

Production Sponsors: ArtsFund, Office of Arts & Culture | Seattle

Sarah Coburn, Andrew Garland, Sarah Larsen, and Marcy Stonikas are graduates of Seattle Opera's Young Artists Program.

Seattle Opera Ticket Information Subscriptions on Sale Now

Four-Opera Renewal and New Subscription Ticket Prices: \$160 to 3,380*

Seattle Opera Ticket Office: 206.389.7676 or 800.426.1619

Online Orders: www.seattleopera.org

All performances take place at Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, 321 Mercer Street

Evening performances begin at 7:30 pm, with matinees at 2:00 pm

*Prices include a \$3-per-ticket facility fee and (in some locations) a preferred seating donation.

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About Seattle Opera

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2014, Seattle Opera is one of the leading opera companies in the United States. Founded in 1963, the company is recognized internationally for its theatrically compelling and musically accomplished performances, especially the Opera's interpretations of the works of Richard Wagner. Since 1975, Seattle Opera has presented 41 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 five continents and 50 states.