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Deluxe New Book Celebrates *50 Years of Seattle Opera*

Written by Melinda Bargreen, frequent contributor of *The Seattle Times*

Seattle—Seattle Opera is now half-a-century old! Founded in the aftermath of Seattle’s 1962 World’s Fair, Seattle Opera has become one of America’s most respected opera companies and a powerhouse in Seattle’s cultural scene. Now, to mark the company’s growth and accomplishments, we are pleased to announce the publication of a stunning new large-format book: *50 Years of Seattle Opera* written by Melinda Bargreen and published by Marquand Books, a Seattle-based designer and producer of fine art books. Bargreen has reviewed and covered the highs and lows of Seattle Opera on behalf of *The Seattle Times* for close to 40 of the company’s 50 years; she writes with a unique authority on the subject.

Bargreen’s vivid narrative combined with a treasure trove of rare photographs will bring readers backstage, onstage and into the orchestra pit to see great moments of Seattle Opera history. It’s all here, from the pioneering days of opera in Seattle and the power struggles at the company’s inception; details of founding General Director Glynn Ross’s close friendships with superstars Joan Sutherland and Beverly Sills, his pie-in-the-sky idea of presenting Wagner’s *Ring* in Seattle, and what happened when his vast ambition finally reached its limit. The book continues with the Speight Jenkins saga, beginning with his first Seattle appearance (as a speaker on the *Ring*) to the triumph of operatic *glasnost* he engineered when Seattle Opera gave *War and Peace* for the 1990 Goodwill Games, to the creation of McCaw Hall and beyond. Bargreen recounts all of the company’s world premieres: *Of Mice and Men*; *Tommy*, the rock opera by The Who starring Bette Midler; and the more recent *Amelia* (2010).

The 11” x 19” book features a “Who’s Who” of more than 50 key players including Marion Oliver McCaw, Henry Holt, Archie Drake, Perry Lorenzo, Vinson Cole, Jane Eaglen, Greer Grimsley, and many others.

50 Years of Seattle Opera is available exclusively through the company's gift shop at McCaw Hall and at <http://seattleopera.org/50thBook>. The book is \$55 for opera subscribers and \$65 for the general public. Online orders will be shipped following this summer's Speight Celebration on August 9, 2014.

2013/14 Seattle Opera Season Sponsor: The late Gladys Rubinstein, in memory of Sam Rubinstein.

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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.