



**THE DALLAS OPERA
MEDIA RELEASE**

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**THE DALLAS OPERA AND
THE STATE OPERA OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE
A New Co-Commission Partnership
For Jake Heggie's MOBY-DICK**

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**WORLD PREMIERE OPERA BASED ON MELVILLE'S NOVEL  
WILL BE STAGED IN AUSTRALIA IN 2011**

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**AUSTRALIAN COMPANY JOINS CONSORTIUM OF PARTNERS:
DALLAS OPERA, SAN FRANCISCO OPERA, SAN DIEGO OPERA
& CALGARY OPERA**

DALLAS, MARCH 26, 2009 – **The Dallas Opera** and **The State Opera of South Australia** have entered into a **new co-commission and co-production partnership** which will bring **Jake Heggie's** highly anticipated world premiere opera, **MOBY-DICK**, to audiences in Adelaide and from throughout the Southern Hemisphere.

Heggie's collaboration with acclaimed **librettist Gene Scheer** (*Thérèse Raquin*, *An American Tragedy*, *To Hell and Back* and *Three Decembers*) will mark the first world premiere of an opera to be presented in the new **Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House at the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts**. It is slated to open on the evening of April 30, 2010 with five additional performances in May.

Following the initial production, *MOBY-DICK* will be presented by the co-producing companies over a three-year period, including The State Opera of South Australia, which will give this new work its first staging south of the equator in 2011.

“This is a very exciting development for all of us,” says **Stephen Phillips, General Director of The State Opera of South Australia**. “We look forward to our supporting role in what I am sure will be a thrilling new opera by Jake and Gene! The libretto is superb, and the staging promises to faithfully reflect the extraordinary atmospherics of Melville’s mid-19th century masterpiece.

“It’s a natural fit,” adds Phillips. “Australia, the home of an ancient indigenous people with a rich artistic heritage, was colonized by Europeans in the era of the great sailing ships. It shouldn’t come as a surprise that Melville’s complex seafaring tale speaks eloquently to Australian hearts, as well as our unique history.”

“The decision to adapt Melville’s novel to the operatic stage is bold and daring,” says **Dallas Opera Director of Artistic Administration Jonathan Pell**. “But in an increasingly multicultural and interconnected world it illustrates the need for people of all cultures and nationalities to find ways to achieve harmonious relations.

“As the ongoing global economic crisis demonstrates, we’re all in this ‘ship’ together. How fitting that we now have a partner halfway around the world to create a work of art that reinforces the ties that unite us.”

The 2010 Dallas world premiere of *MOBY-DICK* will star the acclaimed tenor, **Ben Heppner**, in the pivotal role of “Captain Ahab” with rising stars **Morgan Smith** as “Starbuck” and **Stephen Costello** as “Ishmael.”

This collaboration will mark the fourth time that Maestro **Patrick Summers**, who also serves as Music Director of Houston Grand Opera, has conducted a Jake Heggie world premiere. Previously, he wielded the baton for *Dead Man Walking* and *The End of the Affair*, as well as the world premiere of *Three Decembers (Last Acts)* in February of 2008.

“It should also be remembered,” adds Stephen Phillips, “that The State Opera of South Australia was the first company outside the United States to present Jake Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking*, importing the original San Francisco production to Adelaide in 2003.

“The opera was a huge success attracting large numbers of first time and regular opera goers as well as generating tremendous interest among the Australian arts media.

“I am certain that the many thousands of people who attended the 2003 production (as well as the subsequent production of *Dead Man Walking* presented in Sydney in 2007) will be thrilled at the prospect of attending *Moby-Dick* in September 2011.

“We also staged Jake’s enchanting chamber work, *At the Statue of Venus*, as part of our 2006 Studio Program,” Phillips notes. “That, too, was a big success.”

This new work will be staged by **Leonard Foglia**, the Tony-nominated director of *Thurgood* and *Master Class*.

In addition to Mr. Heppner, Mr. Smith and Mr. Costello, the other stars of this much-anticipated Dallas world premiere include bass-baritone **Jonathan Lemalu** as “Queequeg;” tenor Allan Glassman as “Flask;” baritone **Robert Orth** in his company debut as “Stubb;” and Dallas Opera newcomers **Talise Trevigne**, a soprano in the “trousers” role of “Pip” and baritone **Jonathan Beyer** as “Captain Gardiner.”

The Scenic Designer is Tony Award-winning Dallas native **Michael Yeargan**. Costume design will be by **Jane Greenwood** (nominated a record fifteen times for the Tony Award) with lighting design by Tony Award-winner **Donald Holder**.

Jake Heggie, Composer & Pianist

Jake Heggie is the composer of the acclaimed operas *Dead Man Walking* (libretto: McNally), *Three Decembers* (libretto: Scheer), *The End of the Affair* (libretto: McDonald), the lyric drama *To Hell and Back* (libretto: Scheer), and the musical scene *At the Statue of Venus* (libretto: McNally). The recipient of a 2005/06 Guggenheim Fellowship, he has also composed more than 200 songs, as well as concerti, orchestral works and chamber music. His songs, song cycles and operas are championed internationally by singers including Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham, Audra McDonald, Kiri Te Kanawa, Patti LuPone, Isabel Bayrakdarian, Kristin Clayton, Kristine Jepson, Joyce DiDonato, Joyce Castle, Zheng Cao, and Bryn Terfel. He has collaborated extensively with conductors Patrick Summers, Nicholas McGegan, John DeMain, Michael Morgan, and director Leonard Foglia.

Heggie is currently at work on an epic opera based on Melville’s *Moby-Dick* with librettist Gene Scheer, commissioned by The Dallas Opera for its inaugural season in the Winspear Opera House. Scheduled to open on April 30, 2010, *Moby-Dick* will star the great Canadian tenor Ben Heppner as Ahab; Patrick Summers conducts and Leonard Foglia directs. The opera has been co-commissioned by San Francisco Opera, San Diego

Opera, Calgary Opera and The State Opera of South Australia. Heggie has also been asked to develop an opera project with playwright Richard Greenberg for the Metropolitan Opera and Lincoln Center Theatre.

Dead Man Walking has been performed more than 100 times since its San Francisco premiere in 2000, making it one of the most performed of new American operas. In 2007 alone, the opera was performed more than 50 times internationally, including new productions in Sweden, Ireland and Australia.

Gene Scheer, Librettist

The work of lyricist, librettist and composer Gene Scheer is noted for its scope and versatility. His music and lyrics have gained enthusiastic admirers among a broad audience. Mr. Scheer has collaborated on several projects with Mr. Heggie including the 2008 world premiere of *Three Decembers*, the 2006 one-act opera *To Hell and Back*, and the song cycles *Statuesque* and *Rise and Fall* in addition to a chamber work, *For a Look or a Touch*. In 2005, Mr. Scheer worked as librettist with Tobias Picker on “An American Tragedy” which was premiered at the Metropolitan Opera. This opera was Mr. Scheer’s second collaboration with Mr. Picker. Their first opera “Therese Raquin,” premiered at The Dallas Opera in November 2001. “Therese Raquin” was subsequently performed in Montreal (in a French translation) and in 2003 in San Diego. The recording, available on Chandos, was cited by Opera News as one of the ten best recordings of 2002. In March 2006, a new production of “Therese Raquin” opened at Covent Garden in the Linbury Theater.

Since introducing his compositions just a few years ago, Mr. Scheer's songs have been performed by artists including Renée Fleming (with Christoph Eschenbach), Denyce Graves, Sylvia McNair, Stephanie Blythe, Jennifer Larmore and Nathan Gunn, The distinguished documentary film maker, Ken Burns, chose to feature Norah Jones singing Mr. Scheer’s song “American Anthem” in his film about World War II entitled “The War”. The critically acclaimed seven-part series aired in September 2007 on PBS. “American Anthem,” first performed by Ms. Graves for President and Mrs. Clinton at the Smithsonian Institute, has been recorded both by Denyce Graves (on RCA) and by Nathan Gunn (on EMI). Ms. Graves included Scheer's "Christmas Once More" on her nationally televised PBS Christmas Special and has performed a number of songs by Mr. Scheer with orchestras including the National Symphony in Washington DC (with Leonard Slatkin) and the National Arts Symphony of Canada.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT “MARCH AT THE DALLAS OPERA”
IS CONVENIENTLY AVAILABLE ONLINE
VISIT WWW.DALLASOPERA.ORG AND CHECK THE CALENDAR LISTINGS

For high-resolution, digital photographs suitable for print

To arrange an interview

Or for additional information

Please contact Assoc. Dir. Of Marketing Suzanne Calvin

214.443.1014 or suzannec@dallasopera.org

Ticket Information for the 2009-2010 Dallas Opera Season

Single tickets \$15 to \$199, if purchased in advance. Group ticket sales at a substantial discount. For more information, contact The Dallas Opera Ticket Services Office at 214.443.1000 or visit TDO's web site at dallasopera.org.

THE DALLAS OPERA 2008-2009 SEASON INFORMATION

The Dallas Opera celebrates its Fifty-Third International Season with 30 performances of five productions in the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House at the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Dallas. Evening performances will begin at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday matinees will begin at 2:00 p.m. English translations will be projected above the stage at every performance. Assistance is available for the hearing impaired.

OTELLO by Giuseppe Verdi

October 23, 25(m), 28 & 31, November 5 & 8(m), 2009

A new Dallas Opera production to inaugurate the Winspear Opera House!

An opera in four acts first performed at Milan's Teatro alla Scala, February 5, 1887.

Text by Arrigo Boito after William Shakespeare's tragedy, *Otello*, or *The Moor of Venice*.

Time: the 15th century

Place: The island of Cyprus

Conductor: Graeme Jenkins

Stage Director: Tim Albery*

Production Design: Anthony Baker*

Lighting Design: Thomas C. Hase

Wig & make-up Design: David Zimmerman

Chorus Master: Alexander Rom

Starring: Clifton Forbis (*Otello*), Allan Glassman (*Otello*, Oct. 25th) Annette Dasch** (*Desdemona*), Lado Ataneli* (*Iago*), Sean Panikkar* (*Cassio*), Elizabeth Turnbull (Emilia), Mark McCrory (*Montano*), and Raymond Aceto (*Lodovico*)

COSÌ FAN TUTTE by W.A. Mozart

February 12, 14(m), 18, 20, 26 & 28(m), 2010

One of the world's greatest composers on the subject of love!

An opera in two acts first performed in Vienna's Burgtheater, January 26, 1790.

Text by Lorenzo Da Ponte.

Time: 18th century

Place: Naples, Italy

Conductor: Graeme Jenkins

Stage Director: John Cox

Production Design: Robert Perdziola*

Lighting Designer: Duane Schuler

Wig & make-up Design: David Zimmerman

Chorus Master: Alexander Rom

Starring: Elza van den Heever* (*Fiordiligi*), Jennifer Holloway (*Dorabella*), Michael Todd Simpson (Guglielmo), Brian Anderson (*Ferrando*), Sir Thomas Allen* (*Don Alfonso*) and Nuccia Focile (*Despina*).

DON PASQUALE by Gaetano Donizetti
February 19, 21(m), 24, 27, March 5 & 7(m), 2010
Production from Los Angeles Opera

A comic opera in three acts first performed in Paris' Théâtre Italien, January 3, 1843.

Text by Giovanni Ruffini and the composer after Angelo Anelli's libretto for Stefano Pavesi's *Ser Marcantonio*.

Time: mid-19th century

Place: Rome, Italy

Conductor: Stefano Ranzani*

Stage Director: Candace Evans

Production Design: Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Lighting Design: Duane Schuler

Wig & make-up Design: David Zimmerman

Chorus Master: Alexander Rom

Starring: Donato Di Stefano (*Don Pasquale*), Adriana Kucerova** (*Norina*), Nathan Gunn (*Dr. Malatesta*) and Norman Shankle* (*Ernesto*).

MOBY-DICK by Jake Heggie (World Premiere!)

April 30, May 2(m), 5, 8, 13 & 16(m), 2010

A new Dallas Opera co-commission, co-production with San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera, Calgary Opera and The State Opera of South Australia

World Premiere Performances

An opera in two acts

Text by Gene Sheer after Herman Melville's novel, Moby-Dick

Time: the 19th century

Place: The South Seas

Conductor: Patrick Summers

Stage Director: Leonard Foglia*

Scenic Design: Michael Yeargan

Costume Design: Jane Greenwood*

Lighting Design: Donald Holder*

Wig & make-up Design: David Zimmerman

Chorus Master: Alexander Rom

Starring: Ben Heppner* (*Captain Ahab*), Morgan Smith* (*Starbuck*) Stephen Costello (Ishmael), Jonathan Lemalu* (*Queequeg*), Allan Glassman (*Flask*), Robert Orth* (Stubb), Talise Trevigne* (*Pip*) and Jonathan Beyer* (*Captain Gardiner*).

MADAME BUTTERFLY by Giacomo Puccini

May 7, 9(m), 12, 15, 20 & 23(m), 2010

A Francesca Zambello Production!

An opera in two acts first performed at Milan's Teatro alla Scala, February 17, 1904.

Text by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica after David Belasco's play *Madame Butterfly*, based on a short story by John Luther Long.

Time: Beginning of the 20th century

Place: Nagasaki, Japan

Conductor: Graeme Jenkins

Stage Director: Garnett Bruce

Production: Francesca Zambello

Scenic Design: Michael Yeargan

Costume Design: Anita Yavich

Lighting Design: Alan Burrett

Wig & make-up Design: David Zimmerman

Chorus Master: Alexander Rom

Starring: Adina Nutescu (*Cio-Cio San*), Brandon Jovanovich (*B.F. Pinkerton*), James Westman (*Sharpless*), Maria Zifchak* (*Suzuki*), David Cangelosi (*Goro*), Young-Bok Kim* (*The Bonze*) and Yungbae Yang* (*Prince Yamadori*).

* Dallas Opera Debut
** American Debut

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