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Siemens Festival Night 2010 to open with opera film adapted for children

Making the Richard Wagner Festival a memorable experience for all

The Siemens Stiftung presented the children's program slated for the Siemens Festival Night in Bayreuth on August 21, 2010. The presentation was made on the occasion of the opening of the Bayreuth Festival 2010. The program, supported by the Siemens Stiftung, is intended to encourage young people to join the multi-generational ranks of tomorrow's audiences. The Siemens Stiftung and its President Peter Löscher view the foundation's fostering of culture and the arts as part of its commitment to education and a focal point of its work. "That's why we're offering younger generations a venue for experiencing creativity," noted Michael Rossnagl, who heads the Stiftung's activities in culture and the arts. A specially designed series of hands-on stations gives youngsters the opportunity to experiment with make-up and costumes, try their hand at scenery painting or play various musical instruments. This will help generate enthusiasm for the world of opera at a tender age and show that opera doesn't mean just sitting still.

For the first time this year, the Siemens Stiftung has expanded this public viewing event to include the screening of a new, child-appropriate film version of *Tannhäuser and the Singers' Contest at Wartburg*, as well as the hands-on stations for kids. In the late afternoon and evening, *The Valkyrie* will be broadcast live from the Festspielhaus. All of these offerings underscore one focus of the Stiftung's activities – its commitment to fostering culture. The live, open-air transmission in Bayreuth will give the intended target groups free access to the world of opera.

This is the third year that the Siemens Festival Night will give tens of thousands of people access to the Festival in Bayreuth, fulfilling Richard Wagner's dream of making his music available to a broad public. Once again, tens of thousands of spectators will be able to enjoy this opera event in high-resolution HD video quality on a 90-square-meter, brilliant LED screen, with an advanced sound system ensuring outstanding acoustics even outdoors. Eight remote-control cameras located along the edge of the Festspielhaus stage expand options for camera direction, helping make the broadcast a unique state-of-the-art opera experience – thanks to the support of the evening's main sponsor, Siemens.

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As part of the Siemens Festival Night program, activities for budding young opera fans have been organized by drama instructor Ursula Gessat and will be offered beginning in the morning. An age-appropriate film adaptation of *Tannhäuser* is scheduled to make its debut, with commentary being provided for the young audience. In the afternoon, an interactive children's program on *Tannhäuser* will be offered. At a series of hands-on stations, costume-makers, makeup artists, prop-masters and musicians will playfully acquaint youngsters with Wagner and encourage them to try their hand at various activities. They can participate in age-appropriate activities intended to familiarize them with the plot and characters of the opera and develop their own images and ideas relating to the themes of different plots and productions.

In the afternoon, prior to the performance of Tankred Dorst's production of Wagner's opera *The Valkyrie*, an introduction to Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung* will be given to acquaint the audience with the composer's world. The Siemens Stiftung's primary aim is to reach an audience that spans the generations, people who are not acquainted with Wagner's work and for many of whom the live broadcast will be the first time they have ever seen a Wagner opera. The free open-air transmission is, of course, also intended for all fans – young and old alike – who could not get tickets for a performance.

Prior to the Siemens Festival Night – as of July 25, 2010 – the Siemens Stiftung will provide information and a video on the production of *The Valkyrie* online (www.siemens-stiftung.org/publicviewing). The video presents background information on Wagner's work and its interpretation by Tankred Dorst and his production team. "Proceeding from the love story told on the first evening of the Ring, the brief video enumerates the major themes of Wagner's work and elucidates the threads of the plot," notes Katja Leber, a drama scholar who helped create the clip. Ms. Leber will also give a live introduction to *The Valkyrie* just before the broadcast and, together with music journalist Axel Brüggemann, comment on the performance, prior to the individual acts and the intermission.

As one of the main sponsors of the Siemens Festival Night, Siemens AG not only supports the Siemens Stiftung but is also focusing on providing the technology needed to make the event happen. Opera fans around the world can follow the performance of *The Valkyrie* as a live webstream (www.siemens.com/festivalnight). The fee of €14.90 – with proceeds going to the Bayreuth Festival – also includes access to the webstream-on-demand feature, which allows all long-time and potential Wagner fans to access a video of the event for two weeks following the day of the performance.

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Further information on the Siemens Festival Night and press photos of the event are available online at: www.siemens.com/press/festivalnight

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