COMMEMORATIVE POSTER BY BAY AREA ARTIST MICHAEL SCHWAB CELEBRATES SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S SUMMER 2011 *RING* CYCLE

Limited edition posters available through San Francisco Opera Shop and *sfopera.com/ring*

San Francisco, CA (May 25, 2011) – San Francisco Opera has commissioned famed Bay Area artist Michael Schwab to create an original artwork commemorating the Company's summer 2011 *Ring* cycle. Reflecting the Company's new production of Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*), the design features a striking image symbolizing the heroic Brünnhilde silhouetted against a fiery orange background evocative of the final immolation scene of the cycle's conclusion in *Götterdämmerung*.

The artwork is available as a limited edition poster and will also be featured on the cover of the Company's commemorative *Ring* cycle program book. The poster is printed on archival fine art paper and is available as an unsigned 16"x24" poster ($75) and signed collector's poster 24"x36" ($150) through the San Francisco Opera Shop at the War Memorial Opera House (open during performances), and online beginning June 1 at *sfopera.com/ring*.

Schwab's work is easily recognized by his signature use of large, flat areas of color, dramatic perspectives and bold, graphic images of archetypal human forms. Often working from posed models, he typically designs spontaneously in front of the camera to achieve the lines and shadows he desires. "My graphic heroes have always been the early 20th century poster artists from France, Italy and Germany. My goal was to combine the big, bold drama of those historic posters with a modern cutting edge attitude for this production," said Schwab. "I've always enjoyed creating dramatic poster images that tell a story. Here, the growing vine at the foot of the spear held by Brünnhilde foreshadows a new life eventually emerging from the ever-flowing Rhine under the horrific, burning Valhalla above. For

me, the paper is my stage, with shapes, colors and typography working together to create a scene or evoke a mood."

Renowned Bay Area graphic artist Michael Schwab has created award winning images, posters, and logos for numerous clients, including Robert Mondavi, Turner Classic Movies, Amtrak, Willie Nelson's *Farm Aid*, Robert Redford's Sundance, the 2002 Winter Olympics, and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. In 1992, he collaborated with San Francisco Opera on the Company's poster for *Boris Godunov.*

About The *Ring* Cycle

San Francisco Opera presents Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*), one of the greatest works ever conceived for the operatic stage, in a new production by San Francisco Opera Artistic Adviser and internationally celebrated director Francesca Zambello. The four operas in this new production—*Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*—are presented for the first time as a complete cycle. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* is presented in three complete cycles this summer (June 14–19, June 21–26, and June 28–July 3, 2011) at the War Memorial Opera House. Preceding the *Ring* cycles, San Francisco Opera will present the San Francisco production premiere performance of *Siegfried* on May 29 and the production premiere performance of *Götterdämmerung* on June 5.

Maestro Donald Runnicles, one of the world's most acclaimed Wagner conductors and former San Francisco Opera music director, will lead the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus in these performances that feature an international roster of singers, including Nina Stemme (Brünnhilde), Mark Delavan (Wotan), Jay Hunter Morris (Siegfried/*Siegfried*), Ian Storey (Siegfried/*Götterdämmerung*), Gordon Hawkins (Alberich), Elizabeth Bishop (Fricka), David Cangelosi (Mime), Anja Kampe/Heidi Melton (Sieglinde), Brandon Jovanovich (Siegmund and Froh), Stefan Margita (Loge), Gerd Grochowski (Donner and Gunther) and Andrea Silvestrelli (Fasolt and Hagen).

Tickets for the cycles and individual operas are available online at *sfopera.com* or from the San Francisco Opera Box Office either in person or by phone at (415) 864-3330. Tickets are limited, with best availability offered for the May 29 and June 5 performances and Cycle 3 (June 28–July 3). Standing Room tickets go on sale at 10 a.m. on the day of each performance; standing room tickets are $10 each, cash only. For more information about San Francisco Opera's *Ring* cycle and *Ring* Festival, visit *sfopera.com/ring*.

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