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Two new dining facilities for Lyric Opera patrons made possible by company's purchase of additional space in Civic Opera Building

Lyric Opera patrons will have two new dining facilities to enjoy in the Civic Opera House this season, thanks to the company's purchase of 6800 square feet of additional space from Tishman Speyer Properties, co-owner of the 20 North Wacker Drive property.

Both new dining areas will be open on performance days only, and only to ticket holders for that date's performance.

Construction of the two new areas will begin this summer with a grand opening planned for some time around Christmas, 2008.

A new ground-floor restaurant, which faces Wacker Drive, will be constructed in the space formerly occupied by a bank; another new dining area will be added on the third floor by extending the current lobby into an unoccupied area of the office building. Specific dining concepts for the two new areas are currently under review.

The purchase price for the new space was \$1.8 million. Lyric plans to cover the entire purchase cost through contributions; both spaces present attractive naming opportunities, which are being explored within Lyric's donor family.

"Our Civic Opera House is famous all over the world for its beauty and for its acoustics," said Lyric's General Director William Mason, "but we've long been searching for a way that we could offer our patrons more space for dining and socializing. When Tishman Speyer presented us with this opportunity, we felt we had to do everything possible to make it happen as long as it made sense financially. It does, and we're thrilled to be able make our theater even more appealing to our ticket buyers and donors."

"The Lyric Opera is a world-class arts institution and an essential part of Chicago's cultural landscape," said Casey Wold, senior managing director in Tishman Speyer's Chicago office. "We are delighted to be able to make this transaction, which will provide a great offering for the Lyric Opera's patrons and enthusiasts."

Lyric Opera and Tishman Speyer are co-owners of the Art-Deco 20 North Wacker Drive facility. Lyric owns the Civic Opera House itself, all of the backstage space, and its own administrative offices on the fourth, seventh and eight floors. Tishman owns the commercial office and retail space in the 45-story office tower.

The ground-floor restaurant will offer pre-opera dining, as well as drink and dessert service during intermissions and after the performances. The space will accommodate about 75 people at any one time.

The third floor space will be open before performances and at intermission. Approximately 150 people will be accommodated at any one time.

Lyric's Graham Room (a private dining club for contributors of \$7500 and above); the Opera Club, which serves drinks and coffees on the lower lobby level of the opera house; and bar and snack areas currently open during opera performances will continue as before.

Food service for the two new Lyric restaurants will be outsourced. Proposals from a select group of food-service providers are currently being pursued.

The architectural firm of Aumiller and Youngquist, P.C. will design both new dining areas. The firm has handled a wide variety of projects for various restaurant companies, including Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, Inc. "Obviously, we are going to present designs that are in keeping with this great heritage building and with Lyric itself," Bill Aumiller said. "It is a privilege to be working for one of the great opera companies of the world."

Steve Stratton and Mike Tirpak of The Staubach Company represented Lyric Opera in the transaction, with Craig Martin, Michelle McAtee and Vito Pacione of Jenner & Block providing legal counsel.

Lyric Opera presents 80 performances—both matinees and evenings—over the course of its seven-month season, which opens with Massenet's *Manon* starring Natalie Dessay and Jonas Kaufmann, September 27.

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