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For immediate release  
**Runnicles Deutsche Oper Berlin Appointment**

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## **DONALD RUNNICLES NAMED GENERAL MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE DEUTSCHE OPER BERLIN**

The Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowareit, announced today that effective August 1, 2009, Donald Runnicles will become the General Music Director ("GMD") of the Deutsche Oper Berlin. Born in 1954 in Edinburgh, the internationally renowned conductor has signed a five-year contract effective through July 2014. Berlin's State Secretary of Culture, André Schmitz, comments: "I am delighted that Donald Runnicles, known throughout the world as an experienced and multi-faceted conductor, is joining the Deutsche Oper as General Music Director. His appointment is a significant achievement for the Deutsche Oper and a sign of the international recognition of the company." Runnicles's first performances as Music Director will take place during the 2009/10 season. Beginning in the third year of the agreement he will conduct two new productions and a total of 40 performances each season. About the appointment Runnicles said, "Last April, from the moment I began working with the Deutsche Oper Berlin on the 'Ring' I sensed the possibility to make something special here—something glorious in the best tradition of German opera houses. I am eager to build on the solid foundation laid by others before me in this historic house, and to see what we might achieve together. I am tremendously excited by the prospect and honored to have this opportunity."

Donald Runnicles began his career in 1980 in Germany, and became General Music Director of the City of Freiburg in 1989. He has been Music Director of the San Francisco Opera since 1992, and is Principal Guest Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra as well as Music Director of the Grand Teton Music Festival in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. In September 2009 he will also begin a new position as Principal Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, an appointment announced last month.

Mr. Runnicles conducts regularly at the world's most important opera houses and festivals, including the Metropolitan Opera, the Vienna State Opera, and the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals. This season he will lead a new production of Britten's *Peter Grimes* at the Metropolitan Opera. He regularly conducts the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra and BBC Symphony Orchestra. He appears annually in Great Britain at both the BBC Proms and the Edinburgh Festival.

### ABOUT DEUTSCHE OPER BERLIN:

The Deutsche Oper Berlin, housed in a modern theater in Berlin's Charlottenburg district, is the home of both an opera company and the Berlin State Ballet. The Deutsche Oper Berlin's predecessor, the Deutsches Opernhaus, opened in 1912 with a production of Beethoven's *Fidelio*.

In 1925, its name was changed to the Städtische Oper (Municipal Opera), at a time when several opera companies flourished in the German capital. Bruno Walter was its principal conductor. After the Nazi takeover, Joseph Goebbels had the name changed back to Deutsches Opernhaus, the building was remodeled and the number of seats was reduced. Carl Ebert, the pre-World War II general manager, chose to emigrate from Germany and went on to co-found the Glyndebourne Festival. Although the opera house was destroyed on November 23, 1943, Ebert returned after the war as general manager of the company, using the Theater des Westens until the new building with the current name was completed. The new Deutsche Oper Berlin opened on September 24, 1961 with Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

Music directors and principal conductors of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, in addition to Bruno Walter, included Ferenc Fricsay, Lorin Maazel, Gerd Albrecht, Jesús López Cobos, Jiří Kout, and Christian Thielemann.

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