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Hispanics for LA Opera Present Eleventh Annual

Plácido Domingo Awards

2008 Honors to be Presented to Spanish Baritone Juan Pons and Chilean Soprano Cristina Gallardo-Domâs

Saturday, June 21, 2008 following the final performance of *Tosca*

(LOS ANGELES, CA) June 3, 2008 – **Hispanics for Los Angeles Opera**, a support organization for LA Opera, will honor the accomplishments of two Hispanic singers whose appearances were artistic highlights of the current season. **Plácido Domingo**, Broad General Director of Los Angeles Opera, will recognize Spanish baritone **Juan Pons** and Chilean soprano **Cristina Gallardo-Domâs** at the eleventh annual ***Plácido Domingo Awards Dinner*** which will take place on Saturday, June 21, in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion's Grand Hall, immediately following the 7:30pm final performance of *Tosca*, conducted by Mr. Domingo. "I am thrilled that we will honor Juan Pons and Cristina Gallardo-Domâs this year," said Mr. Domingo. "I have had the privilege of collaborating with these two artists — as both singer and conductor — on numerous occasions. They are two of the most exciting operatic artists of our day, and they have brought great distinction to LA Opera with their magnificent performances here."

Hispanics for LA Opera (HLAO) host an annual ***Plácido Domingo Awards Dinner*** to recognize distinguished Hispanic opera artists and others renowned for their contributions to the operatic genre. Baritone Juan Pons is currently performing the role of Scarpia in the Company's current production of *Tosca*. Soprano Cristina Gallardo-Domâs made her Company debut earlier this season as Desdemona in *Otello*. Proceeds from the Dinner will benefit LA Opera's internationally acclaimed Education and Community Programs, reaching over 150,000 adults and children, many of whom are of Hispanic descent, each year throughout Southern California.

Hispanics for LA Opera is chaired by Orlando J. Ortega, retired Senior Vice President of Cacique, Inc., with Plácido Domingo and Marta Domingo serving as Honorary Chairs. Alicia Garcia Clark (Founder of HLAO) chairs the Plácido Domingo Awards Dinner with Dolores Elena Richardson (President of HLAO) as co-chair.

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As explained by Mr. Ortega, “Each season, HLAO’s Plácido Domingo Awards Dinner honors renowned Hispanic opera artists as well as those who contribute to the awareness of opera and its educational value in the Latino community of Los Angeles.”

Every year, the Dinner is attended by opera lovers and corporate citizens who play a part in the artistic and cultural contributions and programs supported by Hispanics for LA Opera. This year, in gratitude for their past support, HLAO is offering a unique opportunity for their enjoyment of this annual event. For patrons holding or purchasing *Tosca* performance tickets for June 21, the Dinner is priced at only \$150 per person on a first come, first served basis. Printable reservation forms can be obtained by visiting the Hispanics for LA Opera website: www.hispanicsforlaopera.org. For more information about this event, please call (213) 972-7338.

The Honorees

Spanish baritone **Juan Pons**, currently performing the role of Scarpia in *Tosca* with LA Opera, made his Company debut in 1996 as Tonio in *Pagliacci*. With his outstanding 1980 debut at La Scala with *Falstaff*, he became one of the most famous baritones in the world. He is a frequent guest of the world’s greatest theaters, including La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna Staatsoper, Covent Garden and the opera houses of Paris, Zurich and Barcelona. Besides *Falstaff*, a role he repeated at La Scala in 1993 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of its premiere, his repertoire includes all the leading baritone roles in the Italian repertory, as well as such lesser known works as *Aroldo*, *Herodiade*, *Gemma di Vergy*, *Roberto Devereux* and *La Fiamma*. He has sung in many season opening productions at the Metropolitan Opera, with more than 300 performances there. This season’s engagements have included Scarpia in Zurich and Berlin, Amonasro in *Aida* in Barcelona and Michele in *Il Tabarro* at La Scala, and he will perform the title role in *Rigoletto* in Paris in the autumn.

Chilean soprano **Cristina Gallardo-Domâs** made her LA Opera debut in February 2008 as Desdemona in *Otello*. In 1993 she made her European debut at the Spoleto Festival in the title role of *Suor Angelica* as well as her La Scala debut in *La Rondine*. Since then she has performed at all of the main European houses: La Scala (*Les Contes d’Hoffmann*, *Faust*, *Manon*, *Turandot*, *La Traviata*, *La Bohème*); Metropolitan Opera (*La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, *Turandot*); Vienna Staatsoper (*Pagliacci*, *Turandot*, *Traviata*, *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*, *La Bohème*, *Simon Boccanegra*); Paris (*La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*, *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi*, *Faust*, *Otello*); Covent Garden (*Turandot*, *La Bohème*, *Madama Butterfly*); Munich (*La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Otello*); Berlin (*La Traviata*, *Otello*, *Suor Angelica*); Salzburg Festival (*Turandot*); Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (*Turandot*); Tokyo (*La Traviata*); Zurich (*La Bohème*); and Ravinia Festival (*Otello*). She was personally chosen by director Anthony Minghella to star in his production of *Madama Butterfly*, which opened the Met’s 2006/07 season.

For photos of the honorees please visit:

<http://media.laopera.com/photo/?level=album&id=38>

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