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LA Opera's 2007/08 Season Opens with Beethoven's *Fidelio* and Verdi's *Requiem*

Fidelio

Saturday, September 8, 2007 at 6:00PM

**Conducted by James Conlon, Directed and Designed by Pier'Alli,
starring Anja Kampe, Klaus Florian Vogt and Matti Salminen**

Verdi's Requiem

Sunday, September 9, 2007 at 2:00PM

**Plácido Domingo Conducts LA Opera Orchestra and Chorus with Soloists
Adrienne Pieczonka, Stephanie Blythe, Jonas Kaufmann and René Pape**

Grant Gershon Makes Debut as Company's New Chorus Master

Both Opening Performances to be Broadcast Live on Classical KUSC FM 91.5

(LOS ANGELES, CA) August 27, 2007 — “It is with great pleasure that I announce Los Angeles Opera’s twenty-second season will open with two core compositions in classical music: Beethoven’s *Fidelio* and Verdi’s *Requiem*. These two works begin one of LA Opera’s strongest seasons, characterized by great works by some of opera’s best known composers,” announced **Plácido Domingo**, the Eli and Edythe Broad General Director. “I am also proud to announce that Los Angeles’ Classical KUSC 91.5 FM will carry live broadcasts of both performances. Ironically, the idea of our partnership with KUSC was initiated 21 years ago with a live broadcast of LA Opera’s opening night of *Otello* which I performed in. At long last, I’m thrilled that, due to the efforts of many, this partnership can continue again this season with our live broadcasts of *Fidelio* and the *Requiem*, enabling listeners everywhere to experience the thrill of our wonderful performances. Additionally, with Music Director **James Conlon**, I am pleased to welcome **Grant Gershon** for his debut season with the Company as Associate Conductor and Chorus Master.”

LA Opera's 2007/08 Season kicks off with a Gala Celebration Weekend beginning on September 8 with Ludwig van Beethoven's masterpiece *Fidelio*. Conducted by **James Conlon** and directed and designed by **Pier'Alli** in his Company debut, *Fidelio*, set in 18th-Century Spain, is the tragic story of Florestan, a man unjustly imprisoned without charge or trial in a secret jail by the cruel oppressor Don Pizarro. Florestan's steadfast wife Leonore, desperate to find her husband, disguises herself as the jailor's assistant Fidelio, hoping to free her beloved. A triumph of love over evil, this production stars soprano **Anja Kampe** as Leonore and tenor **Klaus Florian Vogt** as Florestan in their Company debuts. **Matti Salminen** returns to LA Opera as the jailer Rocco, baritone **Eike Wilm Schulte** is Don Pizarro, **Oleg Bryjak** is Don Fernando, soprano **Rebekah Camm** is Marzelline and tenor **Greg Fedderly** is Jacquino. The production additionally features tenor **Robert MacNeil** and bass **James Creswell** as prisoners. Classical KUSC will broadcast this performance live. Duff Murphy and Gail Eichenthal will be the hosts.

Despite his reputation as one of the greatest composers of all time, Beethoven only wrote one operatic work during his career. *Fidelio* premiered in 1805 at Vienna's Theater-an-der-Weiden. The production was ill-received during its first run, and Beethoven spent the next ten years revising *Fidelio* before the final version was staged at the Kärntnertheater in Vienna in 1814 to critical acclaim. A meticulously crafted work that clearly demonstrates Beethoven's deep empathy with the subject matter, *Fidelio* is a powerful testament to humanity's capability for strength and heroism.

Fidelio opens September 8 at 6:00pm and runs for six additional performances through October 6 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles. *Fidelio* is made possible by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Milan Panic. *Fidelio* will be sung in German with English supertitles projected above the stage. This production is from Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía (Valencia, Spain).

Concluding the opening Weekend Celebration, **Plácido Domingo** conducts a special concert of the first ever LA Opera presentation of Giuseppe Verdi's *Requiem*, an astounding work featuring a quartet of world-class singers: soprano **Adrienne Pieczonka**, mezzo-soprano **Stephanie Blythe** and, in their Company debuts, tenor **Jonas Kaufmann** and bass **René Pape**. Although intensely dramatic in nature, the *Requiem* is the best known non-operatic work by Verdi, the greatest of all Italian opera composers, and was written to honor one of the central figures of 19th-Century Italian cultural life, Alessandro Manzoni. On the one-year anniversary of Manzoni's death, May 22, 1874, Verdi conducted the premiere of the *Requiem* at the Church of San Marco in Milan, with a repeat performance three days later at La Scala. This performance will also be broadcast live on Sunday at 2pm and Duff and Gail will be the hosts.

Chorus Master and Associate Conductor **Grant Gershon** prepares the LA Opera Chorus for *Fidelio* and Verdi's *Requiem*, two works known for their sophisticated and prominent choral music, for

his debut with LA Opera in his new post. Mr. Gershon is also the Music Director of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, which he has led since 2001.

This special performance of Verdi's *Requiem* will take place September 9 at 2:00pm at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles. Verdi's *Requiem* is made possible by a generous gift from Barbara Augusta Teichert. Verdi's *Requiem* will be sung in Latin.

The live radio broadcasts, which will be hosted by Duff Murphy and Gail Eichenthal, are an extension of the LA Opera's new partnership with Classical KUSC on the broadcast series "LA Opera on Air," which recently concluded broadcasts of performances from the Company's 2006/07 season to local, national and international audiences. Classical KUSC is the largest non-profit classical music station in the country. Located in downtown Los Angeles, the listener-supported station has been broadcasting for 60 years, and is a broadcast service of the University of Southern California. The broadcast of *Fidelio* marks the first time that LA Opera's Opening Night will be broadcast live since the Company's inaugural performance of *Otello*, starring Plácido Domingo, on October 7, 1986.

Performance Schedule and Tickets

Fidelio opens on Saturday, September 8 at 6:00pm. Evening Performances are September 15, 26, 29, October 3 at 7:30pm and two matinees are on September 23, October 6 at 2:00pm.

Tickets to *Fidelio* range from \$20 to \$238, and are on sale at the LA Opera Box Office, by phone at (213) 972-8001 or online at www.laopera.com. For disability access, call (213) 972-0777 or e-mail wehelpyou@laopera.com.

Verdi's Requiem is a special event that takes place on September 9 at 2:00pm.

Tickets to *Verdi's Requiem* range from \$15-\$250, and are on sale at the LA Opera Box Office, by phone at (213) 972-8001 or online at www.laopera.com. For disability access, call (213) 972-0777 or e-mail wehelpyou@laopera.com.

All LA Opera performances take place at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Music Center, 135 North Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90012

Media Kits

Artist headshots and production shots can be found on the LA Opera Press Gallery

Fidelio: <http://www.laopera.com/press/2007-08/fidelio/index.htm>

Verdi's Requiem: <http://www.laopera.com/press/2007-08/requiem/index.htm>

Synopsis for *Fidelio* can be found on the LA Opera website
<http://www.laopera.com/productions/0708/fidelio/synopsis.htm>

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