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LA Opera Celebrates Opening Of The 2007/08 Season Weekend Gala and Festivities Raises \$1.1 Million Dollars for the Company

Opening Night Performance of Beethoven's *Fidelio* Conducted by Music Director James Conlon Marks the Debut of Chorus Master Grant Gershon, Followed by a Special Afternoon with **Plácido Domingo** Conducting LA Opera's First-Ever Performance of *Verdi's Requiem*

(LOS ANGELES, CA) September, 2007 —Los Angeles Opera opened its twenty-second season with a weekend full of special events and two memorable performances - Beethoven's *Fidelio* and *Verdi's Requiem*. The Company celebrates the debut of Grant Gershon as the Associate Conductor / Chorus Master; as well as, live radio broadcasts of both opening performances. Highlighting the weekend were an array of glamorous events, which were attended by over 600 guests from the arts and entertainment community.

"I would like to extend the warmest of thanks to Mary Hayley, Chair of the Gala Weekend Celebration, for her dedicated work in organizing the weekend's incredible festivities," said Plácido Domingo, the Eli and Edythe Broad General Director. "I am also deeply grateful for the generosity of our dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Milan Panic, who not only underwrote our wonderful season-opening production of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, but also served as Honorary Chairs of the Gala Weekend Celebration. I would also like to thank Barbara Augusta Teichert, whose generosity made possible our performance of the *Verdi Requiem*."

Among those in attendance throughout the weekend include the Broad General Director Plácido Domingo and Marta Domingo, Music Director James Conlon and Jennifer Conlon, Chairman and CEO Marc Stern and Eva Stern, Mary Hayley and Selim Zilkha, *Fidelio* underwriters Milan and Milena Panic, *Requiem* underwriter Barbara Augusta Teichert, Eli and Edythe Broad, Sid and Mercedes Bass, Barbara Davis, Michael and Jane Eisner, Breck and Georgia Eisner, John and Kimberly Emerson, new Chorus Master/Associate Conductor Grant Gershon and Elissa Gershon, Thomas and Thea Gottschalk, John and Joan Hotchkis, Patricia Ward Kelly, Thomas and Travis Kranz, Scott and Susan Disney Lord, David Mamet and Rebecca Pidgeon, German bass René Pape, Nancy Daly Riordan and William Isacoff, Esa-Pekka and Jane Salonen, Dennis and Elizabeth Tito, Wally and Sheila Weisman, Alyce de Roulet Williamson, Marilyn Ziering and Howard Walter Anna Maria Alberghetti and Laura Zucker.

LA Opera launched its Gala Weekend festivities on Saturday, September 8, with a performance of Ludwig van Beethoven's masterpiece *Fidelio*, conducted by James Conlon and directed and designed by Pier'Alli in his Company debut. This production starred two electrifying young artists, soprano Anja Kampe as Leonore and tenor Klaus Florian Vogt as Florestan, in their Company debuts. Matti Salminen returned to LA Opera as the jailer Rocco and baritone Eike Wilm Schulte made his Company debut as the villainous Don Pizarro. The black-tie evening continued with a lavish post-performance Gala on the Music Center Plaza, where guests mingled with the artists and enjoyed dancing and a feast created by Patina.

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On Sunday, September 10, a Celebratory Luncheon held on the Music Center Plaza preceded the first-ever LA Opera performance of Giuseppe Verdi's *Requiem*. Plácido Domingo conducted an astounding work featuring a quartet of world-class singers: soprano Adrienne Pieczonka, mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, and, in their Company debuts, tenor Arturo Chácon-Cruz and bass René Pape. Plácido dedicated this performance to the memory of tenor Luciano Pavarotti and of Edgar Baitzel, the Company's late Chief Operating Officer. Following the performance, the Gala Weekend culminated with a Finale Celebration with the artists in the Grand Hall of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

For high-resolution Gala photos:

<http://www.laopera.com/press/2007-08/gala/>

For additional high-resolution photos from LA Opera's Gala Opening Weekend please visit:

Fidelio Opening and Gala 9-8

http://www.salemphoto.com/mp_client/pictures_welcome.asp?categories=no&keywords2=no&eventid=95622

LA Opera Opening Dinner 9-7

http://www.salemphoto.com/mp_client/pictures_welcome.asp?categories=no&keywords2=no&eventid=95618

Verdi Requiem and Gala 9-9:

http://www.salemphoto.com/mp_client/pictures_welcome.asp?categories=no&keywords2=no&eventid=95626

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