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LA Opera Presents the Company Premiere of
Luisa Fernanda

Directed by **Emilio Sagi**, Conducted by *Zarzuela* Master **Miguel Roa**
Starring **Plácido Domingo**
June 3 – 16, 2007

Los Angeles, CA (May ??, 2007) –“I am pleased to announce that LA Opera’s 2006/07 Season will conclude with Federico Moreno Torroba’s *Luisa Fernanda*,” said Plácido Domingo, the Eli and Edythe Broad General Director. “I have always planned for LA Opera to include *zarzuelas* in its repertoire, introducing this wonderful art form to new audiences here in Los Angeles. *Zarzuela*, the music of my native Spanish heritage, is full of so many wonderfully entertaining works, and I am delighted that we are now presenting the Company premiere of one of the most beautiful of them all, *Luisa Fernanda*.”

Conducted by *zarzuela* specialist **Miguel Roa**, directed and designed by **Emilio Sagi** and starring **Plácido Domingo** as Vidal Hernando, **Federico Moreno Torroba’s *Luisa Fernanda*** is the story of the love triangle between the engaged Luisa Fernanda (**Maria José Montiel**), her revolutionary-supporting fiancé Javier (**Antonio Gandía**), and the handsome and wealthy landowner Vidal Hernando, set in 1868 during the reign of Queen Isabel II. *Luisa Fernanda* is co-produced with Teatro Real, Madrid and Washington National Opera. The costumes are designed by **Pepa Ojanguren**, the lighting is by **Mary Louise Geiger** and the choreography is by **Nuria Castejon**. *Luisa Fernanda* opens Sunday, June 3 at 7:30pm and runs for 7 additional performances at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles.

Revolutionaries plot a rebellion, and the monarchy ruling 19th-Century Spain is threatened. Luisa Fernanda is engaged to Javier, who has just been named a colonel in the

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Queen's army, but he seems distracted with politics and is ignoring his soon-to-be wife. Luisa and her father, Don Florito Fernández, arrive at Mariana's inn where they meet the flirtatious and wealthy Vidal Hernando, the republican Don Luis Nogales, his protégé Aníbal and the seamstress Rosita. As Duchess Carolina seduces Javier into joining the monarchists, Vidal Hernando poses as a revolutionary to win Luisa's heart. The republicans win the battle; Javier's counterattack for the monarchy ends in his imprisonment and disappearance; and Vidal's impressive heroism wins Luisa's heart and her hand in marriage. But, in the days before the wedding, Javier returns to Luisa and she must decide which man is her true love.

Plácido Domingo stars in this *zarzuela*, a work close to his heart, as the generous Vidal Hernando, willing to give up the woman he adores to protect her happiness. *Luisa Fernanda* also stars **Maria José Montiel** in the title role, **Antonio Gandía** as Javier, **Elena de la Merced** as Carolina, **Suzanna Guzmán** as Mariana, **Federico Gallar** as Don Luis Nogales, **Camille Zamora** as Rosita, **Daniel Montenegro** as Aníbal, **Valeriano Lanchas** as Don Florito Fernández, **David Robinson** as Vendedor, **Gregorio González** as Bizco Porras, **David Lomeli** as El Saboyano, **Levi Hernandez** as Don Lucas and **Daniel Armstrong** as un Capitán.

History of *Luisa Fernanda*

Luisa Fernanda first premiered in 1932 at Madrid's Teatro Calderón and ran for 158 consecutive performances. Descended from a family of *zarzuela* specialists, Emilio Sagi-Barba, who is also the great grandfather of Emilio Sagi, the director of LA Opera's production, starred as Vidal Hernando opposite soprano Selica Pérez Carpio in the title role and Basque tenor Faustino Arregui as Javier.

Like director Emilio Sagi, Plácido Domingo also has a family connection to the work. Composer Moreno Torroba employed the *zarzuela* company owned by Plácido Domingo, Sr. and his wife Pepita Embil to produce the Latin American tour of *Luisa Fernanda* after World War II. Plácido Domingo, Sr. played the role of Vidal Hernando opposite his wife in the title role. In the years following, *Luisa Fernanda* was reprised many times by the family's company, and Plácido Domingo conducted as well as performed the starring roles. In 1963, he performed in *Luisa*

Fernanda for the production's first television broadcast sponsored by Max Factor cosmetics, co-starring Ernestina Garfias, Franco Iglesias and his mother, Pepita Embil. Finally, in LA Opera's production, Plácido Domingo reprises his father's role as Vidal Hernando.

About Zarzuela

A sub-species of operetta, *zarzuela* has a long and distinguished history that dates to the reign of King Philip IV in early 17th-Century Spain. The King preferred plays interspersed with musical numbers, thus, such productions were produced for his court at the *zarzuela*, the royal hunting lodge outside of Madrid. *Zarzuelas*, which tend to be sentimental or comedic, are characterized by spoken dialogue and their uniquely Spanish rhythm, song and dance.

This production is made possible by a generous gift from Barbara Augusta Teichert

Artist headshots and production shots can be found on the LA Opera Press Gallery
<http://www.laopera.com/press/2006-07/luisa/index.htm>

Synopsis can be found on the LA Opera website
<http://www.laopera.com/productions/luisa.htm>

***Luisa Fernanda*: Educational Programs**

Pre-Performance Lecture – Paul Floyd

June 3, 5, 6, 12, 14, 16, 6:30pm

June 9, 10, 1:00pm

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Grand Hall

Assistant Conductor of LA Opera, Paul Floyd speaks on the difference between *zarzuela* and opera at pre-performance lectures, which begin one hour prior to every performance. Mr. Floyd has held the post as Assistant Conductor of LA Opera since the 2001/02 season. He has held a similar post at Santa Fe Opera for the past seven summers. He is also an accompanist, vocal coach, chamber player and recitalist.

***Luisa Fernanda* Opera Talks**

Members of LA Opera's Speakers' Bureau give free 50-minute talks on *Luisa Fernanda* in libraries throughout Los Angeles County to discuss the elements of *zarzuela* and the history of this production. Following is a list of these talks noting their locations:

May 2, 7:00pm Pasadena Public Library

May 6, 2:30pm Malaga Cove Library

May 7, 7:00pm Buena Vista Branch, Burbank Public Library

May 8, 7:00pm Redondo Beach Library

May 9, 7:00pm Cerritos Library

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May 12, 2:00pm Brand Library
May 14, 6:30pm La Cañada-Flintridge Library
May 15, 6:30pm Granada Hills Library
May 17, 7:00pm Santa Monica Public Library

Performance Schedule and Tickets

Luisa Fernanda opens on Sunday, June 3 at 7:30pm. Evening Performances will be held June 5, 6, 12, 14, 16 at 7:30pm and two matinees will take place on June 9 and 10 at 2:00pm.

Tickets to *Luisa Fernanda* range from \$30 to \$220, 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 performances take place at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Music Center, 135 North Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90012.

Luisa Fernanda will be sung in Spanish with English supertitles projected above the stage.
Luisa Fernanda is a co-production with Teatro Real, Madrid and Washington National Opera

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