

Los Angeles Opera Media Contacts:
Gary W. Murphy, Director of Public Relations
gmurphy@laopera.com / 213.972.7554
Melissa Goldberg, Public Relations Manager
mgoldberg@laopera.com / 213.972.7274

**LA Opera to Present Company Premiere of
Verdi's *Requiem*
At 2007/08 Opening Weekend Celebration**

**Plácido Domingo Conducts LA Opera Orchestra and Chorus with Soloists
Adrienne Pieczonka, Stephanie Blythe, Jonas Kaufmann and René Pape
Sunday, September 9 at 2:00pm**

(LOS ANGELES, CA) May 24, 2007 – “Los Angeles Opera will present Giuseppe Verdi’s *Requiem* at 2:00pm on September 9, 2007, at Dorothy Chandler Pavilion,” said Plácido Domingo, the Eli and Edythe Broad General Director, who will conduct the performance. “The *Requiem* will be performed by the LA Opera Orchestra and the LA Opera Chorus, prepared by Grant Gershon in his debut season as Chorus Master. Four internationally renowned soloists will be featured: soprano Adrienne Pieczonka, mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, and in their Company debuts, tenor Jonas Kaufmann and bass René Pape. The performance will take place as part of the Company’s Opening Weekend Celebration, one day after LA Opera begins its 2007/08 Season on September 8 with Beethoven’s *Fidelio*.” This performance of the *Requiem*, replaces a previously announced “Plácido Domingo and Friends Gala.”

Although intensely dramatic in nature, the *Requiem* is the best known non-operatic work by Giuseppe Verdi, the greatest of all Italian opera composers. Composed during his presumed retirement after the great success of *Aida*, Verdi assumed that the *Requiem* would be his final composition. (Much later, he would be persuaded to compose his final masterpieces, *Otello* and *Falstaff*.) The *Requiem* was written to honor one of the central figures of 19th-Century Italian cultural life, Alessandro Manzoni. The poet, novelist and political leader was, like Verdi, a passionate advocate of Italian independence and unification. After Manzoni’s death in 1873, Verdi remembered his earlier plan to compose a funeral mass for Gioacchino Rossini in collaboration with several other important Italian opera composers; the *Messa per Rossini* never

-More

came to pass, but Verdi had completed a “Libera Me” section, which he reworked and expanded as part of his new *Requiem*. On the one-year anniversary of Manzoni’s death, May 22, 1874, Verdi himself conducted the premiere of the *Requiem* at the Church of San Marco in Milan, with a repeat performance three days later at La Scala.

LA Opera’s first ever presentation of the Verdi *Requiem* will feature an impressive quartet of world-class vocalists. Canadian soprano Adrienne Pieczonka, who made her LA Opera debut as Elsa in *Lohengrin* in 2001, has also appeared with the Company as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* (2005) and the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (2006) and she will return to sing the title role in *Tosca* here in 2008. She recently had an enormous success as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* at the Bayreuth Festival. American mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, who made her LA Opera debut in 1998 as Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff*, has rapidly become one of the most highly respected artists of her generation, with appearances during the 2006/07 season as Azucena in *Il Trovatore* with Covent Garden, Isabella in *L’Italiana in Algeri* with the Seattle Opera, and in three roles in a new production of *Il Trittico* with the Metropolitan Opera. German tenor Jonas Kaufmann, who will make his LA Opera debut, has recently emerged as one of the most exciting tenors of his generation, with upcoming appearances as Alfredo in *La Traviata* with the Paris Opera, La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera and Covent Garden; as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with the Berlin Staatsoper; and as Chevalier des Grieux in *Manon* with the Vienna Staatsoper. German bass René Pape, who also will make his LA Opera debut, was recently honored by the Metropolitan Opera Guild at the second annual Opera News Awards for his distinguished contributions to opera. So far during 2007, he has been heard as Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Metropolitan Opera; and Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* and the title role in *Boris Godunov* with the Berlin Staatsoper, where he will also be heard as King Philip in *Don Carlo*.

Tickets to the Verdi’s *Requiem* range from \$15 to \$250. Advance reservations are available by phone at (213) 972-8001. Disability access: (213) 972-0777. TDD: (213) 972-7615.

Artist headshots can be found at the LA Opera Press Gallery:

<http://www.losangelesopera.com/press>

###