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LA Opera Presents Giuseppe Verdi's Final Tragic Masterpiece *Otello*

Featuring Tenor **Ian Storey** in U.S. Debut,
Soprano **Cristina Gallardo-Domâs** in Company Debut and
Baritone **Mark Delavan** in Company Stage Debut

LA Opera Music Director **James Conlon** Conducts

Saturday, February 16 – Sunday, March 9

(Los Angeles, CA) January 17, 2008 – “I am proud to announce that LA Opera will present the return of Verdi’s greatest tragedy, *Otello*,” said **Plácido Domingo**, the Company’s Eli and Edythe Broad General Director. “*Otello* holds a particular significance in the history of LA Opera, because it was the first opera ever produced by the Company, in 1986. I am delighted that British tenor **Ian Storey** has accepted our invitation to make his American debut in the title role in this production, for he has garnered worldwide acclaim for his performances in the dramatic tenor repertoire roles in major European opera houses. Mr. Storey will be joined by an impressive cast under the leadership of our Music Director **James Conlon**.”

LA Opera’s production of *Otello* opens on Saturday, February 16 at 7:30pm and continues for six additional performances through Sunday, March 9 at 2:00pm. Performances take place at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles CA 90012.

Music Director **James Conlon** conducts and stage director **John Cox** leads an extraordinary cast in this stunning production of *Otello*, a co-production with the Opéra de Monte Carlo and Teatro Regio di Parma. British tenor Ian Storey* makes his American debut as Otello. The European press has declared this exciting

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young artist's *Otello* is "vocally and dramatically simply brilliant" (*Thurgauer Zeitung*, Switzerland). Starring opposite Mr. Storey is Chilean soprano **Cristina Gallardo-Domâs*** in her Company debut as Desdemona and baritone **Mark Delavan*** as Iago in his Company stage debut. Tenor **Derek Taylor** as Cassio, mezzo-soprano **Ning Liang*** as Emilia and bass **Eric Halfvarson** as Lodovico (who also appears with LA Opera as King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde*) round out the cast. The production is designed by **Johan Engels** and the lighting is designed by **Simon Corder**. LA Opera Associate Conductor / Chorus Master **Grant Gershon** leads the chorus.

Verdi's transformation of the original Shakespeare play is a powerful drama of uncontrolled human emotion at its most extreme. The evil sadist Iago taunts and manipulates the Moor of Venice, cleverly exploiting his one fatal flaw: jealousy. This musical portrait of *Otello's* descent into a tortured heart of darkness is explicit in every chilling detail as he destroys all in life that he holds dear. Many of the most fervent Shakespeareans have admitted that *Otello's* emotional collapse in the opera is more devastatingly real than in the play because of Verdi's overpowering music.

Otello opens on Saturday, February 16, 2008 at 7:30pm with additional evening performances on February 21, 24 and March 5 at 7:30pm; and matinee performances on February 27 at 1:00 pm (new weekday matinee), March 2 and March 9 at 2pm. All performances will be held at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Tickets to *Otello* 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. LA Opera has launched a new Crosstown Motor Coach Service from the Westside for weeknight performances. Call 213-972-8001 for more information.

Production made possible by a consortium of LA Opera Board Members

Pre-performance conversation with James Conlon hosted by Michael Hackett. Pre-performance lectures are generously sponsored by the Flora L. Thornton Foundation and the Opera League of Los Angeles.

(* *LA Opera Debut*)

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Otello Opera Talks

Members of LA Opera's Speakers' Bureau will be giving free 50-minute talks on *Otello* in libraries throughout Los Angeles County. These lively and engaging talks will explore the various aspects of Verdi's tragic masterpiece. Below please find the list of the *Otello* opera talk dates and locations:

Monday, February 4	7:00 PM	Buena Vista Branch Public Library
Thursday, February 7	7:00 PM	Pasadena Public Library
Thursday, February 7	6:30 PM	Woodland Hills Branch Library
Saturday, February 9	2:00 PM	Brand Library, Glendale
Monday, February 11	6:30 PM	La Cañada-Flintridge Library
Tuesday, February 12	6:30 PM	Porter Ranch Branch Library
Tuesday, February 12	6:30 PM	Granada Hills Library
Tuesday, February 12	7:00 PM	Redondo Beach Library
Saturday, February 16	2:00 PM	Claremont Library
Tuesday, February 19	7:00 PM	Platt Library, Woodland Hills
Wednesday, February 20	7:00 PM	Cerritos Library
Thursday, February 28	7:00 PM	Santa Monica Public Library

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

<http://www.losangelesopera.com/press/2007-08/otello>

Synopsis can be found on the LA Opera website:

<http://www.losangelesopera.com/productions/0708/otello>

Otello will be sung in Italian with English supertitles projected above the stage.
This is a Co-Production with Opéra de Monte-Carlo and Teatro Regio di Parma

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