

Los Angeles Opera Media Contact:
Gary W. Murphy, Director of Communications and Public Relations
gmurphy@laopera.com / 213.972.7554

Plácido Domingo Announces James Conlon to Extend Contract through 2011 as Music Director of LA Opera

(LOS ANGELES, CA) September 5, 2007 – “It is with great pleasure that I announce that our distinguished Music Director **James Conlon** has extended his contract with LA Opera through the Company’s 2010/11 Season,” announced **Plácido Domingo**, the Eli and Edythe Broad General Director of LA Opera. “After his outstanding successes here during the 2006/07 Season, his debut Season as Music Director of the Company, I am proud that LA Opera’s musical excellence will remain under the exceptional guidance of this world-class artist and I am delighted that Mr. Conlon’s first operatic music directorship in the United States, after his many successes in important European positions, has proven a triumph. I am honored that he will continue to play a vital role in the Company’s strategy for continued growth in artistic distinction, and thrilled to continue working with him as we approach LA Opera’s 25th Anniversary Celebration.”

James Conlon’s initial contract as Music Director of LA Opera, which became effective on July 1, 2006, extended through June 30, 2009. With his new contract, he will remain Music Director through June 30, 2011, the year that LA Opera will celebrate its 25th Anniversary. By that time, he will have conducted numerous landmark productions for the Company, including three complete *Ring* cycles scheduled for 2010, the signature David Hockney production of *Tristan und Isolde* in 2008, and several fully-staged productions in the multi-year *Recovered Voices* project, devoted to presenting the works of early 20th-Century composers suppressed by the Nazis. He conducted five productions during the 2006/07 Season and will conduct five productions during the current 2007/08 Season, and is expected to continue along that line for the remaining three Seasons of his contract.

“I am very happy to be continuing with LA Opera,” said James Conlon. “I am extremely gratified by the support and enthusiasm that I have enjoyed in the past year, and have interpreted it as a sign of things to come in the future. The spirit of the company, embodied by my great friend and colleague Plácido Domingo, by the orchestra and chorus, the entire musical, theatrical and administrative staff, and the Board of Directors, has led me to conclude that this still young company will grow into one of the

most important in the world in the coming decades. The ever increasing allure of Los Angeles as one of the cultural capitals of the world augurs well. I am proud to be a part of that future.”

This announcement is the latest step in the continuing evolution of one of America’s most ambitious and fastest-growing opera companies. Most recently, Los Angeles Master Chorale Director Grant Gershon was named LA Opera’s new Associate Conductor / Chorus Master in May. Mr. Gershon, in collaboration with Mr. Domingo and Mr. Conlon, will be responsible for building and shaping the Los Angeles Opera Chorus into a choral ensemble with a distinctive musical identity and aesthetic.

“Mr. Conlon’s talent and experience have added immeasurably to LA Opera’s prestige,” said Chairman and CEO Marc I. Stern. “Under the distinctive leadership of Plácido Domingo, our reputation has never been higher, and James Conlon’s tenure as Music Director has been an essential element of the Company’s current success. With Mr. Conlon leading so many landmark profile productions in the coming years, our potential for further creative and artistic expansion is extraordinary, and I am absolutely delighted that his involvement here will ensure our continued growth.”

One of the world’s preeminent conductors, James Conlon has cultivated a vast symphonic, operatic and choral repertoire, and has conducted virtually every prestigious symphony orchestra in the U.S. and Europe. In addition to his position as Music Director of LA Opera, he became Music Director of the Ravinia Festival (summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) in 2005, and has been Music Director of the Cincinnati May Festival, America’s oldest choral festival, since 1979. Among more than 600 operatic performances in his years as music director in European opera houses are a complete Wagner cycle at the Cologne Opera and five Wagner operas at the Paris Opera. He has conducted more than 250 performances in over three decades at the Metropolitan Opera. Through worldwide touring, an extensive discography, and frequent television appearances, he is one of today’s most recognized conductors. He is widely known as an educator and for his work with young musicians. This season he begins a two-year special artist residency with his alma mater, The Juilliard School, an educational project consisting of performances, symposia, master classes, and coaching across genres, meant to promote growth and historical curiosity in students and audience members. He has made a significant effort to increase awareness of a lost generation of 20th-century composers whose works were suppressed for political reasons during the Nazi regime, and was recently honored by the Anti-Defamation League for his work in this area. Along with Plácido Domingo, he received one of the five inaugural Opera News Awards, given in recognition of distinguished contributions to the world of opera. In 1999, he received the Zemlinsky Prize for his efforts in bringing that composer’s music to international attention. In 2002, he was awarded France’s highest distinction, the Légion d’Honneur, by the President of France.

Photographs can be found on the LA Opera Press Gallery
<http://www.laopera.com/press>

###