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LA Opera Presents Two Free Community Performances of

The Festival Play of Daniel *A Medieval Music Drama*

James Conlon to Conduct

Saturday, February 27 at 4:00PM and 7:00PM
at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels

Tickets Available on Monday, January 25 at 10:00AM

(Los Angeles, CA) January 20, 2010 – **Plácido Domingo**, LA Opera’s Eli and Edythe Broad General Director, announced today that the Company will present two family performances of the medieval music drama *The Festival Play of Daniel* at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. The performances will be conducted by **James Conlon**, the Company’s Richard Seaver Music Director. The performances will take place on Saturday, February 27 at 4:00pm and 7:00pm and will be offered free of charge as a special gift to the community; advance tickets are required for admission (there will be a \$1 handling fee and a four-ticket limit per order). Tickets will be available beginning Monday, January 25 at 10:00am. The Cathedral is located at 555 West Temple Street in Los Angeles.

LA Opera’s community performances at the Cathedral were among the first initiatives Mr. Conlon brought to the Company after his 2006 arrival as music director. *The Festival Play of Daniel* follows the Company’s enormous successes with recent productions of Britten’s *Noah’s Flood* and Handel’s *Judas Maccabaeus* at the Cathedral, when overflow crowds cheered the charm and spectacle of familiar biblical stories. “I am thrilled that Los Angeles families have responded to our community productions at the Cathedral with so much enthusiasm and appreciation,” said Mr. Conlon. “*The Festival Play of Daniel* gives us another

wonderful opportunity to work again with singers and musicians of all ages, and I hope that everyone involved will enjoy this great example of LA Opera's outreach to the entire community." *The Festival Play of Daniel* will continue the tradition of LA Opera artists performing alongside nearly 400 community volunteers in a work that has been described as "nothing less than an earlier operatic masterpiece."

Dating from the early 13th century, *The Festival Play of Daniel* is a liturgical drama with music, first performed by monastic students at the Cathedral of Beauvais, north of Paris. The original composers and writers are unknown. It recounts the beloved Old Testament story of the courageous prophet Daniel. When mysterious and incomprehensible writing appears on the wall of King Belshazzar's palace, none of the king's advisors can decipher it, except for Daniel. Soon thereafter, as foretold by Daniel, King Darius defeats and kills King Belshazzar. The new king honors the prophet but this causes other counselors to become jealous of the favor shown to Daniel. The counselors trick the new king into proclaiming himself a deity and then condemning Daniel, who will worship none but the one true God. King Darius reluctantly condemns Daniel to be cast into a den of lions. Just as the lions are about to spring on the prophet, an angel appears and protects him from the jaws of the hungry animals.

The cast includes three current members of LA Opera's Domingo/Thornton Young Artist Program: tenor **Hak Soo Kim** as Daniel, bass-baritone **Yohan Yi** as King Belshazzar and soprano **Danielle Walker** as the Queen. Tenor **Greg Fedderly** will sing the role of Habakkuk, with tenor **Robert MacNeil** as King Darius and countertenor **Caleb Barnes** as the Angel. Additional soloists include **Daniel Armstrong**, **Gregorio González**, **Jonathan McCullough** and **LeRoy Villanueva**. *The Festival Play of Daniel* will be directed by **Eli Villanueva** and choreographed by **Leslie Stevens**, with scenery design by **Carolina Angulo** and costume design by **Paula Higgins**. **Jacqueline Reid** will design the lighting, and **Todd Reynolds** will be the sound designer.

For *The Festival Play of Daniel*, director Eli Villanueva has translated the original Latin libretto into English and scored it for student orchestra musicians performing alongside a professional chamber ensemble. LA Opera's production of *The Festival Play of Daniel* will feature performing forces of several hundred participants, with an orchestra made up of members of the Los Angeles Opera Orchestra as well as the Hamilton High School Academy of Music Orchestra (Vance Miller, orchestra director) and the Colburn School String Orchestra (Margaret Shimizu and Joni-Lynn Steshko, conductors). The performance will also feature both child and adult singers, drawn from the Choir of St. John Eudes Church and School (Richard Medrano, choir director), the Colburn School Children's Choir (Mikhail Shtangrud, choir director), Pueri Cantores San Gabriel Valley Children's Choir (Patrick Flahive, musical director), Central High School #9 Theater Academy (Russell Copley, drama instructor), the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels Choir (Frank Brownstead, choir director), teachers from LA Opera's Opera for Educators program and students from LA Opera's Youth Opera Camp program.

Admission to *The Festival Play of Daniel* is free of charge, with a handling fee of \$1.00 per order. There is a four-ticket limit per household, subject to availability. Tickets are required for entry, and can be reserved online at www.laopera.com or by phone at (213) 972-8001, beginning on Monday, January 25 at 10:00am.

**Production made possible by generous underwriting support
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All programs, artists and dates are subject to change.

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