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Plácido Domingo Recognizes Late Chairman Emeritus Richard Seaver (1922-2007) by Naming Title of LA Opera’s Music Director

**“Richard Seaver Music Director,” a post held by James Conlon,
honors influential leader and single most generous
benefactor in the history of LA Opera**

(Los Angeles, CA) January 8, 2009 – **Plácido Domingo**, LA Opera’s Eli and Edythe Broad General Director, has announced that the Company has named the position of Music Director in honor of the late **Richard Seaver**, Chairman Emeritus of the Board of Directors at the time of his death in 2007. Music Director **James Conlon** now holds the title “Richard Seaver Music Director.” The new title recognizes one of LA Opera’s most influential leaders and the Company’s single most generous benefactor, whose extraordinary leadership and unflagging commitment were crucial in enabling LA Opera to grow into an internationally acclaimed major opera company.

“Richard Seaver was one of the most beloved and important leaders in LA Opera’s history,” said Mr. Domingo. “His guidance and generosity were matched only by his sheer joy in experiencing the beauty and wonder of opera. In our 2001 and 2005 presentations of *Tosca*, Richard received enormous enjoyment performing the supernumerary role of the Cardinal, whose climactic blessing concludes the dramatic first act. Our 2008 performances of *Tosca*, without Richard, were a bittersweet experience for many of us.”

In his 23 years involvement with the Company, Richard Seaver and his family contributed over \$15 million to support the Company, making him one of the Company’s most generous benefactors. Mr. Seaver was a founding member of the LA Opera Board of Directors, subsequently serving as President, Chairman and Chairman Emeritus. Working closely with the Company’s two General Directors, Peter Hemmings and Plácido Domingo, throughout those years, he provided thoughtful and articulate leadership that was instrumental in fashioning a world-class opera company in Los Angeles. At the time that LA Opera was founded in 1986, Los Angeles was the only major Western city without its own opera company.

“Richard Seaver, our dear friend and colleague, truly was the heart and soul of LA Opera,” said Marc I. Stern, Chairman and CEO of LA Opera. “He was a remarkable individual whose passion and commitment played an incalculable role in making the Company what it is today. I think that he would have been absolutely delighted to have the title of the Company’s Music Director bear his name.”

A member of LA Opera’s Board of Directors since 1986, Richard Seaver played a pivotal role in the Company’s artistic growth and development since its inception. He was elected President of the Board in 1993, and served in that position until becoming Chairman in 2000 and then Chairman Emeritus the following season. He was an underwriter for the Company’s 2004 production of *La Bohème* and 2006 production of *Don Carlo*, and made his onstage debut in the 2001 production of *Tosca* in the supernumerary role of the Cardinal, a performance he reprised in 2005. His extraordinary commitment as a member of the Founding, Domingo’s, and 20th Anniversary Angels, the highest echelon of support for LA Opera, played a significant role in the Company’s recent artistic achievements under Plácido Domingo.

“Few things made my father as happy as a great night at the opera, and he was so proud to have played a role in promoting LA Opera’s rich artistic heritage,” said Carlton Seaver, Richard Seaver’s son and an LA Opera Board member. “I know that his onstage appearances in *Tosca* were absolutely exhilarating for him, and gave him some of his happiest memories. We are extremely proud of his long association with LA Opera and thrilled that the Company has chosen to honor his memory with this extraordinary gesture.”

“I am privileged to have worked with this pivotal figure in LA Opera’s history throughout the first season of my tenure with the Company,” said Mr. Conlon. “Richard Seaver will always be remembered for his powerful work ethic and fierce dedication, qualities we all espouse at LA Opera. I am proud to be associated with this opera company and with Richard Seaver’s name.”

Celebrating its 23rd Season, Los Angeles Opera has become, under the leadership of Eli and Edythe Broad General Director Plácido Domingo and Richard Seaver Music Director James Conlon, the nation’s fourth largest opera company and a renowned producer of works from the classical and contemporary repertoires. The 2008/09 Season includes the return of several of the Company’s landmark productions as well as important new productions, including the first two installments – *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* – of a new Achim Freyer production of Wagner’s monumental four-opera *Ring* cycle.

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