

PLÁCIDO DOMINGO ELI AND EDYTHE BROAD GENERAL DIRECTOR
JAMES CONLON RICHARD SEAVER MUSIC DIRECTOR

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LA Opera's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* Wins Two Grammy Awards for Best Classical Album and Best Opera Recording

**James Conlon Conducted LA Opera Orchestra and Chorus
Starring Audra McDonald, Patti LuPone and Anthony Dean Griffey
with Donnie Ray Albert, John Easterlin, Steven Humes, Mel Ulrich,
Robert Wörle; Audio Producer is Fred Vogler**

(LOS ANGELES, CA) February 9, 2009—LA Opera's 2007 production of Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, filmed live in performance at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, has won Grammy Awards in two categories: Best Classical Album and Best Opera Recording. "I am so proud that LA Opera's production of this powerful masterpiece has been singled out for this honor," said **Plácido Domingo**, LA Opera's Eli and Edythe Broad General Director. "This performance of *Mahagonny* represents what LA Opera does best: namely, to present striking performances with extraordinary artists." The performance, conducted by **James Conlon** (LA Opera's Richard Seaver Music Director), stars **Audra McDonald** (Jenny Smith), **Patti LuPone** (Leocadia Begbick) and **Anthony Dean Griffey** (Jimmy McIntyre), with **Donnie Ray Albert** (Trinity Moses), **John Easterlin** (Jack O'Brien), **Steven Humes** (Alaska Wolf Joe), **Mel Ulrich** (Bank Account Bill) and **Robert Wörle** (Fatty the Bookkeeper). Grammy trophies in these categories are given to the audio producer, conductor and principal artists, which in this case also include the **Los Angeles Opera Chorus** and the **Los Angeles Opera Orchestra**. The audio producer is **Fred Vogler**. The DVD was released by EuroArts and distributed by Naxos. The Grammy winners were announced in Los Angeles on February 8, 2009. "I am so pleased that James Conlon, our music director, has won his first Grammy Awards for his work in one of our productions," continued Mr. Domingo, "and particularly gratified that our wonderful chorus and orchestra have also won this great recognition."

LA Opera's production of *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* was directed for the stage by John Doyle and performed from February 10 through March 4, 2007, at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. The performance, filmed in high-definition video and released on DVD by EuroArts, was also telecast on Thirteen/WNET's *Great Performances* in the fall

of 2007. Gary Halvorson directed for television, with Christopher Koelsch, Mitch Ovwang and John Walker as producers and Tom Baer and David Horn as executive producers. The sets were by Mark Bailey, with costumes by Ann Hould-Ward, stage lighting by Thomas C. Hase and sound design by Dan Moses Schreier.

Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny is a unique opera laced with raucous music hall ditties, in which a boomtown rises from the desert to become a razzle-dazzle mecca for lust, liberty and the pursuit of pleasure. With book and lyrics by the influential playwright Bertolt Brecht, four-time Tony Award winner Audra McDonald stars as Jenny, a tart-with-a-heart, and Broadway legend Patti LuPone as the town's feisty madam. Kurt Weill (composer of *The Threepenny Opera* and its hit "Mack the Knife") penned a haunting score, which crosses over from opera to cabaret to Broadway including ragtime, jazz and the classic pop hit "Moon of Alabama." John Doyle, the director of Broadway's smash hit revivals of *Sweeney Todd* and *Company*, delivered a risqué new production as controversial as the original one banned by the Nazis in the 1930s. LA Opera's production was greeted with great critical acclaim. "McDonald is stunning," proclaimed *The Los Angeles Times*. "She sings with tremendous power. She knows what the words mean." Tenor Anthony Dean Griffey, who plays Jimmy, the lover of McDonald's character, Jenny, was also praised by *The Los Angeles Times*: "He is the perfect Jimmy. He falls for Jenny and he falls hard on his luck with a touching innocence." *Opera Now* wrote "James Conlon showed the right Weill-ish stuff, deftly mixing street smarts and Modernist elegance in the performance." Ms. LuPone drew special praise from *The New York Times* for her portrayal of the tough-as-nails Leocadia Begbick, the opera's gang boss. "Patti LuPone makes a jaded and bluntly direct Begbick and handles the high tessitura of the role with surprising agility."

The recording was made possible by generous support from Eva and Marc Stern. LA Opera's 2007 production of Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* was a new production made possible by a generous gift from Laura Donnelley, with additional generous support received from The James Irvine Foundation and from Marvin Antonowsky.

Celebrating its 23rd Season, Los Angeles Opera has become, under the leadership of Eli and Edythe Broad General Director Plácido Domingo, 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.

Artist headshots and production photographs are available on the Los Angeles Opera Press Gallery:

<http://www.laopera.com/press/photo.htm>

Order the DVD of the LA Opera production of *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*

<http://www.laopera.com/press/pdf/Mahagonny%20Grammy%20release.pdf>

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