SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S *MADAMA BUTTERFLY, DON GIOVANNI, SAMSON AND DELILAH* AND *LA RONDINE* COME TO SUNDANCE KABUKI CINEMAS, FEBRUARY-APRIL 2010

San Francisco Opera's *Grand Opera Cinema Series* in HD begins February 13 & 17 with Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* Starring Soprano Patricia Racette, Tenor Brandon Jovanovich and Mezzo-Soprano Zheng Cao

SAN FRANCISCO (January 28, 2010) – San Francisco Opera partners with Sundance Cinemas to present HD screenings of the Company's acclaimed productions of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and *La Rondine*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Saint-Saëns's *Samson and Delilah* at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas in San Francisco. The monthly Saturday matinee (10 a.m.) and Wednesday evening (6:30 p.m.) screenings begin in February with *Madama Butterfly* and continue through April 2010. Recorded live at the War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco Opera's cinema presentations are presented for the first time at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas, one of the city's premier movie theaters.

The series begins on February 13 and 17 with *Madama Butterfly*, Giacomo Puccini's classic story of colliding hearts and cultures which features some of opera's most beautiful and captivating music. *Madama Butterfly* stars celebrated American soprano Patricia Racette in her signature role as the tragic heroine Cio-Cio-San opposite rising American tenor Brandon Jovanovich as Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton and mezzo-soprano Zheng Cao as Suzuki. Former San Francisco Opera Music Director Donald Runnicles conducts this stirring San Francisco Opera production created by Ron Daniels and directed by Kathleen Belcher.

The series continues on February 27 and March 3 with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. The Don Juan legend crackles to life in the hands of one of the world's most beloved composers. Cannily balancing comedy and tragedy, Leah Hausman directs this riveting San Francisco

Opera/Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie co-production by David McVicar, conducted by Donald Runnicles. The cast features leading baritone Mariusz Kwiecien in the title role, with soprano Elza van den Heever as Donna Anna, soprano Twyla Robinson as Donna Elvira, tenor Charles Castronovo as Don Ottavio and bass Oren Gradus as Leporello.

Camille Saint-Saëns's sweeping biblical epic *Samson and Delilah*, presented on March 20 and 24, stars mezzo-soprano Olga Borodina as the seductive Delilah and tenor Clifton Forbis as the Old Testament hero who loses his heart, his hair and nearly his soul. Sandra Bernhard directs the opulent San Francisco Opera production by Nicolas Joël. Patrick Summers, San Francisco Opera's principal guest conductor and Houston Grand Opera's music director, conducts.

Giacomo Puccini's rarely performed gem *La Rondine*, which played to sold-out houses at the War Memorial Opera House, screens on April 3 and 7. Renowned soprano Angela Gheorghiu stars as the worldly Magda de Civry in this staging of Puccini's elegant and poignant opera that tells the story of love between a kept woman from high society and a naïve younger man of moderate means. The cast also features tenor Misha Didyk (Ruggero), soprano Anna Christy (Lisette) and tenor Gerard Powers (Prunier). Ion Marin conducts this dazzling Art Deco-inspired production conceived by Nicolas Joël and directed by Stephen Barlow.

Recorded live in high definition at San Francisco's historic War Memorial Opera House, all shows include English subtitles and a brief intermission featuring behind the scenes interviews. All performances feature the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and San Francisco Opera Chorus (Ian Robertson, Chorus Director). Please see attached calendar for a complete schedule and screening information.

Tickets for San Francisco Opera's *Grand Opera Cinema Series* at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas are priced at $14 and are available via sundancecinemas.com, where patrons may also select seats in advance, and at the Sundance Kabuki Box Office. For more information about Sundance Kabuki Cinemas, visit sundancecinemas.com or call (415) 346-3243.

For more information about San Francisco Opera's *Grand Opera Cinema Series*, including additional theaters currently screening the series, and further information and video clips of *Madama Butterfly*, *Don Giovanni*, *Samson and Delilah* and *La Rondine*, visit sfopera.com/cinemaseries.

About Sundance Cinemas LLC

Based in Los Angeles, California and launched in 2006, Sundance Cinemas, LLC is building a multiple facility national theatre circuit. Sundance Cinemas, LLC brings together Robert Redford's Sundance brand, a recognized name in independent film and a team of nationally recognized exhibition executives. Sundance Cinemas is dedicated to redefining and enriching the specialized exhibition experience, and are programmed with the very best in Event, Independent and World Cinema.

About San Francisco Opera's *Grand Opera Cinema Series*

San Francisco Opera launched its digital cinema series in Spring 2008 with its presentation of *La Rondine*, *Samson and Delilah*, *Don Giovanni* and *Madama Butterfly* to movie theaters across the country. These operas are now available to theaters and performing arts venues as part of the Company's *Grand Opera Cinema Series*, which focuses on distributing San Francisco Opera cinema presentations to arts centers, independent film theaters, universities, and other venues in the western region of the country.

The cinema series is one of the many electronic media initiatives launched under the direction of General Director David Gockley. These include the Company's free live simulcasts, one of the first innovations of David Gockley's tenure and part of the Company's campaign to bring opera into the community. Since 2006, the Company has presented seven free live simulcasts at venues throughout the Bay Area, including San Francisco's AT&T Park, for nearly 120,000 fans. San Francisco Opera's simulcasts and cinemacasts are made possible through the technology of the Company's Koret-Taube Media Suite, the first permanent HD broadcast-standard video production facility installed in an American opera house. The media suite gives the Company the permanent capability to generate a high-definition, multi-camera live feed of the stage for many uses including cinema presentations, its expanding tradition of free outdoor simulcasts, OperaVision (offering full stage, close-up and mid-range ensemble shots in high-definition video on two retractable screens for patrons seated in the balcony section of the War Memorial Opera House), and for educational and other uses. A grant from the Koret Foundation provided lead funding for the Koret-Taube Media Suite, with additional support provided by Tad and Dianne Taube. An anonymous donor committed the remaining required funding.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S *GRAND OPERA CINEMA SERIES* AT THE SUNDANCE KABUKI CINEMAS, FEBRUARY-APRIL 2010

SUNDANCE KABUKI CINEMAS, 1881 Post Street, San Francisco

TICKETS: $14; patrons may purchase tickets and select seats in advance at sundancecinemas.com. Tickets are also available at the Sundance Kabuki Box Office.

INFORMATION: For more information about Sundance Kabuki Cinemas, visit sundancecinemas.com or call (415) 346-3243. For more information about San Francisco Opera's *Grand Opera Cinema Series*, and to view video clips of these operas, visit sfopera.com/cinemaseries.

San Francisco Opera's *Madama Butterfly* in HD

Saturday, February 13 at 10 a.m.
Wednesday, February 17 at 6:30 p.m.

Sundance Kabuki Cinemas
1881 Post Street, San Francisco

Sung in Italian with English subtitles
Running time: 2 hours and 40 minutes with one ten-minute intermission
Rating: General Audiences

One of the world's most beloved and dramatic operas, *Madama Butterfly* is a classic tale of colliding hearts and cultures set in 19th-century Japan. Internationally acclaimed soprano Patricia Racette is Cio-Cio-San, a geisha tragically torn between two worlds and forced to make the ultimate sacrifice in order to retain her honor. The cast is also led by tenor Brandon Jovanovich as Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton, mezzo-soprano Zheng Cao as Cio-Cio-San's maid and confidante, Suzuki, and baritone Steven Powell as the American consul Sharpless. The San Francisco Opera production, created by Ron Daniels and designed by Michael Yeargan, is directed by Kathleen Belcher and conducted by Donald Runnicles. Recorded live at the War Memorial Opera House in Fall 2007.

San Francisco Opera's *Don Giovanni* in HD

Saturday, February 27 at 10 a.m.
Wednesday, March 3 at 6:30 p.m.

Sundance Kabuki Cinemas
1881 Post Street, San Francisco

Sung in Italian with English subtitles
Running time: 3 hours and 5 minutes with one ten-minute intermission
Rating: General Audiences

Leading baritone Mariusz Kwiecien sings the title role of Mozart's Don Juan setting in this riveting San Francisco Opera/Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie co-production conceived by director David McVicar and production designer John McFarlane. The cast features sopranos Elza van den Heever (Donna Anna) and Twyla Robinson (Donna Elvira), mezzo-soprano Claudia Mahnke (Zerlina), tenor Charles Castronovo (Don Ottavio), basses Oren Gradus (Leporello) and Kristinn Sigmundsson (Commendatore), and bass-baritone Luca Pisaroni (Masetto). Conducted by Donald Runnicles and directed by Leah Hausman. Recorded live at the War Memorial Opera House in Summer 2007.

San Francisco Opera's *Samson and Delilah* in HD

Saturday, March 20 at 10 a.m.
Wednesday, March 24 at 6:30 p.m.

Sundance Kabuki Cinemas
1881 Post Street, San Francisco

Sung in French with English subtitles
Running time: 2 hours and 35 minutes with two ten-minute intermissions
Rating: General Audiences

Saint-Saëns's sweeping biblical epic stars mezzo-soprano Olga Borodina as Delilah and tenor Clifton Forbis as the Old Testament hero who loses his heart, his hair, and nearly his soul. The cast also features bass-baritone Juha Uusitalo as The High Priest of Dagon, bass Oren Gradus in the role of An Old Hebrew and bass-baritone Eric Jordan as Abimélech. Sandra Bernhard directs this sumptuous San Francisco Opera/Nicolas Joël production featuring sets by Douglas Schmidt and costumes by Carrie Robbins. Patrick Summers conducts. Recorded live at the War Memorial Opera House in Fall 2007.

San Francisco Opera's *La Rondine* in HD

Saturday, April 3 at 10 a.m.
Wednesday, April 7 at 6:30 p.m.

Sundance Kabuki Cinemas
1881 Post Street, San Francisco

Sung in Italian with English subtitles
Running time: 2 hours and 5 minutes with one ten-minute intermission
Rating: General Audiences

Renowned soprano Angela Gheorghiu stars as Magda de Civry in Puccini's rarely-performed gem. Tenor Misha Didyk is the naïve young man (Ruggero) who falls in love with the worldly Magda in this Italian take on Viennese operetta. Soprano Anna Christy (Lisette), tenor Gerard Powers (Prunier) and bass-baritone Philip Skinner (Rambaldo) round out the cast. The stunning Art Deco-inspired production by Nicolas Joël (from Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Théâtre du Capitole, Toulouse), with set design by Ezio Frigerio and costumes by Franca Squarciapino, is directed by Stephen Barlow and conducted by Ion Marin. Recorded live at the War Memorial Opera House in Fall 2007.

- SFO -

This press release and downloable photographs of *Madama Butterfly*, *Don Giovanni*, *Samson and Delilah* and *La Rondine* and are available at sfopera.com/press.

For further press information, please contact San Francisco Opera Communications:
Jon Finck (415) 565-6472 / jfinck@sfopera.com
Robin Freeman (415) 565-6451 / rfreeman@sfopera.com