SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ADLER FELLOW LEAH CROCETTO SELECTED TO REPRESENT UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AT 2011 *BBC CARDIFF SINGER OF THE WORLD COMPETITION*

SAN FRANCISCO, March 8, 2011—Soprano Leah Crocetto, a current San Francisco Opera Adler Fellow, was selected as one of the final twenty singers to compete in the prestigious 2011 *BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition*. The 20 finalists selected from more than 600 singers from 68 countries will each perform in a recital competition for the Song Prize and a concert competition for the Singer of the World Prize. Competitors will also be eligible for the first-ever Dame Joan Sutherland Audience Prize, named in memory of the competition's first patron. Leah Crocetto's recital performance will take place on June 14, 2011 and her concert performance at St. David's Hall, accompanied by the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera and conducted by Lawrence Foster, will take place on June 16, 2011.

The *BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition* is open participants ages 18–32 who are selected through world-wide auditions; only one singer may be selected to represent a country. Established in 1983 by BBC Wales, this biennial competition is considered a premier showcase for opera and concert singers at the start of their careers. The esteemed jury for this year's *BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition* includes first-time judges famed soprano Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, conductor Alexander Polianichko, director Lorenzo Mariani and pianist Bengt Forsberg. Returning judges include baritone Håkan Hagegård, tenor Dennis O'Neill, Adam Gatehouse from BBC Radio 3 and mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne, who marks her fifth visit to the Cardiff competition. Past winners of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition include soprano Karita Mattila (in the competition's inaugural year), baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky and soprano Guang Yang.

"I am exceedingly proud of Leah Crocetto for her outstanding achievement in being selected for this competition," said San Francisco Opera General Director David Gockley. "The *Cardiff*

Competition is unquestionably one of the most important and prestigious vocal competitions in the world, and I am thrilled to see Leah represent both the United States and San Francisco Opera on this distinguished international stage. We will certainly be cheering for her from home!"

A third-year Adler Fellow and alumna of the 2008 Merola Opera Program, soprano Leah Crocetto will open San Francisco Opera's 89th season as Liù in Puccini's *Turandot*. She made her Company debut as Sister Dolcina (*Suor Angelica*) in the 2009 production of Puccini's *Il Trittico* and appeared as the Priestess in last season's *Aida* as well as multiple roles in *Cyrano de Bergerac*. San Francisco Opera Center recently presented Crocetto in a Schwabacher Debut Recital, and she has appeared several times in the Company's annual *Opera in the Park* and *Stern Grove Festival* concerts. During her time as an Adler Fellow, Crocetto has worked closely under the artistic guidance of San Francisco Opera Center Director Sheri Greenawald and Director of Musical Studies Mark Morash; both have played a pivotal role in her preparation for the *Cardiff Competition*.

A winner of the 2010 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Crocetto makes her European debut this season as Leonora in *Il Trovatore* with Opéra National de Bordeaux and will also appear as Desdemona in *Otello* at Frankfurt Opera and in the Poulenc *Gloria* with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Other future engagements include Mahler's Second Symphony at the Grand Teton Festival, conducted by Donald Runnicles; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Hollywood Bowl; and the Verdi Requiem with the Columbus Symphony and the Albany Symphony, a work she recently debuted with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel.

Leah Crocetto's numerous awards include First Place, People's Choice and the Spanish Prize in the 2009 José Iturbi International Music Competition in Los Angeles; a 2009 San Francisco Foundation Artist's Grant; a 2008 Shoshana Foundation Award; Second Place in the Florida Suncoast Opera Guild Competition; a Sara Tucker Award; and First Prize in the Bel Canto Foundation Competition.

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