SAN FRANCISCO OPERA OPENS 88TH SEASON WITH VERDI'S *AIDA,*
CONDUCTED BY MUSIC DIRECTOR NICOLA LUISOTTI
SEPTEMBER 10, WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE

OPENING NIGHT FESTIVITIES INCLUDE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD'S
OPERA BALL 2010* AND BRAVO! CLUB'S *OPENING NIGHT GALA

FALL 2010 FREE COMMUNITY EVENTS INCLUDE
***SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE PRESENTS OPERA IN THE PARK*,**
SEPTEMBER 12, GOLDEN GATE PARK AND
***WEBCOR BUILDERS PRESENTS OPERA AT THE BALLPARK*, SEPTEMBER 24, AT&T PARK**

SAN FRANCISCO (September 10, 2010)—San Francisco Opera opens its 2010–11 Season on Friday, September 10 at the historic War Memorial Opera House with Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*, featuring Micaela Carosi, Dolora Zajick, Marcello Giordani and Marco Vratogna. Music Director Nicola Luisotti conducts the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus in a magnificent production by British fashion designer Zandra Rhodes. A highlight of the City's fall cultural season, San Francisco Opera's opening-night festivities include San Francisco Opera Guild's *Opera Ball 2010* and BRAVO! CLUB's *Opening Night Gala*.

The opening week celebration continues on Sunday, September 12 with a beloved Bay Area tradition: the annual *San Francisco Chronicle Presents Opera in the Park* at Sharon Meadow in Golden Gate Park. This free concert features singers from the Fall 2010 Opera Season with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra conducted by Nicola Luisotti.

The opening of the Fall Opera Season is also highlighted by *Webcor Builders Presents Opera at the Ballpark* on Friday, September 24. San Francisco Opera partners with the San Francisco Giants and Webcor Builders once again to bring grand opera to AT&T Park, home of the San Francisco Giants baseball team.

One of the Bay Area's most anticipated community events, this unique admission-free evening of entertainment features the Company's production of *Aida*, conducted by Maestro Luisotti and broadcast live in high definition (HD) from the stage of the War Memorial Opera House to the 103-feet wide scoreboard over the outfield of AT&T Park.

Opera Ball 2010 / Friday, September 10

San Francisco Opera Guild kicks off the San Francisco philanthropic season on Friday September 10 with *Opera Ball 2010*, co-chaired by Charlot Malin and Mary Poland. Hailed as one of the City's most glamorous cultural events, *Opera Ball* raises funds for San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Opera Guild's education programs while treating guests to an exceptional evening of food, beverages and world-class entertainment. The event begins at 5 p.m. with an elegant reception featuring signature cocktails—the GREY GOOSE ® L'Orange White Cosmopolitan: The Pharaoh and the GREY GOOSE ® La Poire Anjou Gem: The Gem of the Nile—under a large canopy reminiscent of the Old Cairo Hotel. Following the reception in the North Light Court of San Francisco City Hall, a sumptuous dinner created by Chef Lucas Schoemaker of McCall Associates will be served in the elegant Beaux-Arts style rotunda of the building. After dinner, guests will enjoy the season-opening performance of Verdi's *Aida* at the War Memorial Opera House at 8 p.m. The evening culminates with desserts and dancing under the rotunda at City Hall to live musical entertainment by the Side-Spin Band. This entire evening will be designed by VanWyck & VanWyck, a leading event production firm based in New York City that is famous for incorporating whimsical details and stunning theatrical elements to their designs. The décor for the evening is inspired by the Egyptian theme of *Aida* and incorporates fabrics and textures reminiscent of Zandra Rhodes's costume designs.

BRAVO! CLUB's *Opening Night Gala* / Friday, September 10

BRAVO! CLUB, San Francisco Opera's group of young professionals dedicated to building a new audience for opera, presents its 19th annual opening night gala on Friday, September 10, co-chaired by Jane Burkhard and Anjelika Koulebakina. BRAVO! CLUB begins the evening at 5 p.m. with a pre-performance hors d'oeuvres and sparkling wine reception in the South Light Court of San Francisco City Hall. Dinner will follow featuring an exotic Egyptian-inspired menu created by McCall Associates and paired with local wines. After dinner, guests will enjoy San Francisco Opera's performance of Verdi's dazzling Egyptian love story, *Aida,* at the War Memorial Opera House. The evening concludes back at City Hall with dancing to both a live band and the music of DJ Aykut, with delectable desserts by McCall Associates and spirits from

SKYY Vodka. The evening will be designed by VanWyck & VanWyck of New York City, famous for their green designs and hip productions, notably including Sean "Diddy" Combs' recent 40th birthday party.

Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* / Friday, September 10

San Francisco Opera's 2010–11 Season opens with Giuseppe Verdi's classic masterpiece *Aida*. A compelling tale of conflicting loyalties and forbidden passions, this spectacular production, previously seen at Houston Grand Opera and English National Opera, is designed by renowned fashion designer Zandra Rhodes and directed by Jo Davies. Of the production, General Director David Gockley explains that "Zandra's work is pure theater, just like she is. It's bigger than life and full of fantasy. It's perfect for making a big impact in a venue the size of ours." The cast features Italian soprano Micaela Carosi making her Company debut in the title role, Verdian mezzo-soprano and former Adler Fellow Dolora Zajick as Amneris and Marcello Giordani making his role debut as Radames. Returning after his highly-praised performance in last season's *Otello* is Marco Vratogna as Amonasro; baritone Hao Jiang Tian returns to San Francisco Opera as Ramfis after his 2008 Company debut as Chang the Coffinmaker in *The Bonesetter's Daughter*. Music Director Nicola Luisotti leads the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus.

San Francisco Chronicle PresentsOpera in the Park / Sunday, September 12

San Francisco Opera's opening weekend festivities continue with *San Francisco Chronicle Presents Opera in the Park* on Sunday, September 12 at 1:30 p.m. in Golden Gate Park's Sharon Meadow. A cherished tradition of San Francisco Opera's season opening, the annual *Opera in the Park* concert features singers from the Company's Fall 2010 Season and the San Francisco Opera Orchestra conducted by Maestro Luisotti. The concert draws thousands of music lovers each year, many of whom enjoy the occasion with elaborate picnics on the lawn. In the event's time-honored finale, the audience joins with the singers in a rousing rendition of the drinking song ("Libiamo nei'lieti calici") from Verdi's *La Traviata*. This concert is free, no tickets are required.

Webcor Builders Presents Opera at the Ballpark / Saturday, September 24

San Francisco Opera partners with the San Francisco Giants and Webcor Builders once again to bring grand opera to AT&T Park, home of the San Francisco Giants baseball team on Friday, September 24 at 8 p.m. This free live simulcast of Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* features Micaela Carosi, Dolora Zajick, Marcello Giordani and Marco Vratogna and is conducted by Music Director Nicola Luisotti. Conceived by David Gockley as a way to further the Company's community involvement, San Francisco Opera's four previous simulcasts at AT&T Park have allowed nearly 100,000 music lovers to experience grand opera for free in

one of San Francisco's most beautiful locations. Through state-of-the-art technology made possible by the Koret-Taube Media Suite, these simulcasts are transmitted in high definition (HD) to AT&T Park's 103-feet wide scoreboard—one of the highest quality outdoor scoreboards in the nation—live from the stage of the War Memorial Opera House. Concert quality audio combined with AT&T Park's huge screen creates an unmatched operatic experience for attendees sitting in the stands and on the baseball field. Traditional baseball game concessions are available, providing audiences the rare opportunity to eat hot dogs, peanuts and popcorn while enjoying glorious opera.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets for San Francisco Opera Guild's *Opera Ball 2010* are $850, $1,500, $2,500 and $5,000 and are entirely sold out.

Tickets for BRAVO! CLUB'S *Opening Night Gala*, which include performance tickets, are priced from $375 to $500 and are entirely sold out.

Tickets for the performance of Verdi's *Aida* (not including opening night galas) are priced from $25 to $320 and may be purchased at www.sfopera.com or through the San Francisco Opera Box Office [301 Van Ness Avenue (at Grove Street), or by phone at (415) 864-3330]. Standing Room tickets go on sale at 10 a.m. on the day of each performance; tickets are $10 each, cash only.

The September 12 *San Francisco Chronicle Presents Opera in the Park* concert at Sharon Meadow in Golden Gate Park is free, no tickets are required. For more information, visit www.sfopera.com/park or call (415) 864-3330.

The September 24 *Webcor Builders Presents Opera at the Ballpark* simulcast at AT&T Park is free and open to the public; advance online registration assures early entrance into the ballpark for preferred seating and entry into a special prize drawing. Visit www.sfopera.com/simulcast to register.

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA 88TH SEASON OPENING CELEBRATIONS

OPERA BALL 2010 **Friday, September 10**

A highlight of the City's cultural and philanthropic season, San Francisco Opera Guild's *Opera Ball 2010* begins with an elegant pre-performance cocktail reception and sumptuous dinner followed by the season-opening performance of Verdi's *Aida* and dancing at San Francisco City Hall. *Opera Ball* raises funds to benefit San Francisco Opera and the Opera Guild's education and community programs. Co-chairs: Charlot Malin and Mary Poland. For tickets or more information about *Opera Ball 2010*, call (415) 565-3204.

5 p.m. The black-tie evening begins with a cocktail reception and dinner at San Francisco City Hall

8 p.m.	Opening night performance of *Aida* at the War Memorial Opera House
11 p.m.	Guests adjourn to San Francisco's historic City Hall for dessert and dancing to live musical entertainment

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BRAVO! CLUB'S 19TH ANNUAL OPENING NIGHT GALA **Friday, September 10**

Join BRAVO! CLUB's young professionals as they kick off the season in style with a glamorous pre-performance cocktail reception and seated dinner at City Hall followed by the season-opening performance of *Aida* and post-performance dancing. Co-chairs: Jane Burkhard and Anjelika Koulebakina. Tickets are available only to current BRAVO! CLUB members. For tickets and membership information, email bravoclub@sfopera.com or call (415) 565-3285.

5 p.m.	The celebration begins with a cocktail reception and dinner at San Francisco City Hall
8 p.m.	Opening night performance of *Aida* at the War Memorial Opera House
11 p.m.	Festivities continue with dessert, live music and dancing at San Francisco City Hall

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AIDA by Giuseppe Verdi

Co-production with English National Opera and Houston Grand Opera

PRODUCTION NEW TO SAN FRANCISCO
September 10 (8 p.m.)**, 16•** (7:30 p.m.)**, 19•** (2 p.m.)**, 24•** (8 p.m.)**, 29•** (7:30 p.m.)**; October 2•** (8 p.m.)**, 6•** (7:30 p.m.), **2010**

Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni
Approximate running time: 3 hours with one intermission
Sung in Italian with English supertitles

First Performance:	Cairo, December 24, 1871
First SFO Performance:	October 3, 1925
Most Recent SFO Performances:	June 2001

Cast:

Aida	**Micaela Carosi***
Amneris	**Dolora Zajick**
Radames	**Marcello Giordani ♪**
Amonasro	**Marco Vratogna**
Ramfis	**Hao Jiang Tian**
King of Egypt	**Christian Van Horn***
Priestess	**Leah Crocetto†**
Messenger	**David Lomelí†**

Production Team:

Conductor	**Nicola Luisotti**
Director	**Jo Davies***
Production Designer	**Zandra Rhodes**
Lighting Designer	**Christopher Maravich**
Original Choreographer	**Jonathan Lunn**
Revival Choreographer	**Lawrence Pech**
Chorus Director	**Ian Robertson**

* San Francisco Opera Debut † Current Adler Fellow ● OperaVision performance

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SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE PRESENTS OPERA IN THE PARK **Sunday, September 12 at 1:30 p.m.**
Sharon Meadow, Golden Gate Park

A cherished tradition of San Francisco Opera's opening week, the annual *Opera in the Park* concert features arias and operatic excerpts performed by artists from San Francisco Opera's 2010 Fall Season, accompanied by the acclaimed San Francisco Opera Orchestra conducted by music director Nicola Luisotti. The concert draws thousands of music lovers each year, many of whom enjoy the occasion with elaborate picnics on the lawn. This concert is free, no tickets are required. For more information visit www.sfopera.com/park

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WEBCOR BUILDERS PRESENTS **Friday, September 24 at 8 p.m.**
OPERA AT THE BALLPARK AT&T Park, 24 Willie Mays Plaza

Baseball and opera fans alike have the rare opportunity to enjoy world-class opera in the beautiful and convivial outdoor setting of AT&T Park as San Francisco Opera continues its highly successful partnership with the San Francisco Giants and Webcor Builders to present Verdi's *Aida*. This event is free and open to the public; advance online registration assures early entrance into the ballpark for preferred seating and entry into a special prize drawing. Visit sfopera.com/simulcast to register.

About San Francisco Opera Guild

San Francisco Opera Guild supports the Bay Area's school children, teachers, parents, and the extended community through its award-winning arts education programs. Founded in 1939, San Francisco Opera Guild has acted on its belief that that the life lessons drawn from creative expression are the foundation of confidence and integrity by developing programs that extend the impact of opera, bringing it center stage into the life of the community. Through San Francisco Opera Guild's education fund, more than 58,000 students in 250 schools throughout Northern California find their voice each year, receiving the benefits of arts education, as only opera can deliver them. San Francisco Opera Guild also provides for the performance of opera on theater stages throughout the community and strives to make opera accessible to all through its opera appreciation programs.To learn more about San Francisco Opera Guild, visit sfopera.com/guild.

About BRAVO! Club

San Francisco Opera's BRAVO! CLUB is a group of young adults dedicated to building a new audience for San Francisco Opera. Founded in 1991, BRAVO! CLUB has an annual membership of over 500 Bay Area professionals and hosts a variety of educational and performance-related events in support of San Francisco Opera. If you enjoy opera, BRAVO! CLUB offers you a chance to experience San Francisco Opera with other arts lovers aged 21–40. To learn more about BRAVO! CLUB visit sfopera.com/bravo. Actively utilizing social networking to connect with other members and opera fans, BRAVO! CLUB can be found on Facebook at facebook.com/SFBRAVOCLUB

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Aida is made possible, in part, by Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey. Additional support provided by United Airlines.

Opera Ball 2010 is made possible by generous support from Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey, National Media Sponsor Town and Country, Local Media Sponsor Nob Hill Gazette, Jewelry Sponsor Boucheron, Spirit Sponsor GREY GOOSE Vodka, Wine Sponsor William Hill Estate Winery, and Sparkling Wine

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BRAVO! CLUB's Opening Night Gala is made possible by the generous financial support of Asset Management Company, GreeburgTaurig LLP Law Firm, Accretive Solutions and Fiber Tower. Wine sponsors include Meadowcroft Family of Wines, De Loach Winery, William Hill, Lake Sonoma Winery and Artesa Winery. Sparkling wine sponsors are Boisset Family Estates and LaMarca. Spirit sponsor is Skyy Spirits.

San Francisco Chronicle Presents Opera in the Park is made possible, in part, by Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey. Additional support provided by the William and Gretchen Kimball Fund. Platinum Sponsor Charles Schwab and Silver Sponsor Kaiser Permanete Thrive.

San Francisco Opera simulcasts are made possible through the extraordinary technology of the Company's Koret-Taube Media Suite. A grant from the Koret Foundation provided lead funding for the Koret-Taube Media Suite, with additional support provided by Tad and Dianne Taube. *Webcor Builders Presents Opera at the Ballpark* is supported by Presenting Sponsor Webcor Builders, Platinum Sponsor Charles Schwab and Gold Sponsor Chevron and United Airlines. Funding for this simulcast is made possible by an Excellence Award from The Wallace Foundation.

Yamaha is the official piano of San Francisco Opera. Pianos provided by Music Exchange.

2010–11 Season Sponsor

For further press information or to obtain 2010–11 Season announcement–related photographs, please visit sfopera.com/press or contact:

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