

27,000 ATTEND SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S FREE LIVE SIMULCAST OF VERDI'S *RIGOLETTO* AT AT&T PARK



SAN FRANCISCO, September XX, 2012—On Saturday, September 15, a crowd of 27,000 people flocked to San Francisco Opera's seventh live simulcast at AT&T Park for a free evening of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, conducted by San Francisco Opera Music Director Nicola Luisotti. The performance, which also entertained an audience of 2,700 at the War Memorial Opera house across town, featured an all-star cast, including Željko Lučić in the title role, Aleksandra Kurzak as Gilda and Francesco Demuro as the Duke of Mantua. This annual event, presented by Webcor Builders in association with the San Francisco Giants, has become one of San Francisco's most-loved traditions; San Francisco Opera simulcasts have drawn a combined crowd of more than 192,000 people since 2006. San Francisco Opera's presentation of Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto* continues for only five more performances through September 30. For tickets and information, please visit www.sfopera.com.

"The seven free live simulcasts that we have presented at AT&T Park continue to be one of this Company's proudest achievements," states San Francisco Opera General Director David Gockley. "To know that a combined crowd of nearly 30,000 people were enjoying the glorious music of Verdi's *Rigoletto* simultaneously last Friday night is an inspiration for us to continue bringing this art form out into the community in creative and accessible ways."

Free live simulcasts are among the first innovations of San Francisco Opera General Director David Gockley's tenure and part of the Company's campaign to bring opera into the community and to wider audiences. The first simulcast debuted in May 2006 with Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, drawing 8,000 people to San Francisco's Civic Center Plaza. An audience of approximately 14,000 gathered in October 2006 for Verdi's *Rigoletto* at Civic Center Plaza and Frost Amphitheatre at Stanford University. In June 2007 a live simulcast of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* played to capacity crowds at four venues (San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Cal Performances at UC Berkeley, Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts at UC Davis, and the Wells Fargo Center for the Arts in Santa Rosa). In September 2007, Saint-Saëns's *Samson and Delilah* wowed nearly 15,000 opera fans at the first AT&T Park simulcast; 23,000 fans enjoyed summer madness at the ballpark with *Lucia di Lammermoor* in June 2008; *Tosca* brought tears and cheers to over 27,000 in June 2009; *Il Trovatore* brought the ballpark crowd of 25,000 to its feet in September 2009; Verdi's *Aida* brought an unprecedented crowd of 32,000 to AT&T Park in 2010; in 2011 despite gloomy weather forecasts, 16,000 people enjoyed Puccini's *Turandot* al fresco on a beautiful San Francisco day, and in 2012 AT&T Park once again opened upper deck seating to accommodate the 27,000 fans who came out for Verdi's *Rigoletto*.

Company Sponsors John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn, and Mrs. Edmund W. Littlefield, are proud to support this production. This production is made possible, in part, by Opening Weekend Grand Sponsor Diane B. Wilsey. Major support for this production also provided by the Great Interpreters of Italian Opera Fund established by Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem. Nicola Luisotti's appearance made possible by Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem, Chairs, Amici di Nicola of Camerata. Mr. Lučić's appearance is made possible by a gift to the Great Singers Fund by Joan and David Traitel. Webcor Builders Presents Opera at the Ballpark is supported by Presenting Sponsor Webcor Builders, Gold Sponsors Charles Schwab, Chevron and United Airlines. 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.

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