



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

**SAN FRANCISCO OPERA AND ITALY'S TEATRO DI SAN CARLO OF NAPLES
TO PRESENT COMBINED CONCERT OF VERDI'S CHORAL MASTERPIECE,
MESSA DA REQUIEM, FRIDAY OCTOBER 25, WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE**

**NICOLA LUISOTTI, MUSIC DIRECTOR OF BOTH COMPANIES, TO CONDUCT
HISTORIC PERFORMANCE FEATURING 320 SINGERS AND MUSICIANS ON STAGE
PLUS VOCAL SOLOISTS LEAH CROCETTO, MARGARET MEZZACAPPA,
MICHAEL FABIANO AND VITALIJ KOWALJOW**

**PRESENTED AS PART OF WORLDWIDE GIUSEPPE VERDI BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION AND
*2013 THE YEAR OF ITALIAN CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES***

GALA FUNDRAISING BENEFIT TO BE HELD JUNE 15, SAN FRANCISCO'S FAIRMONT HOTEL



SAN FRANCISCO (May 29, 2013)—San Francisco Opera today announced unprecedented plans to combine musical forces with Italy's renowned Real Teatro di San Carlo of Naples for a historic concert performance of Giuseppe Verdi's choral masterpiece, *Messa da Requiem* on Friday, October 25, 2013. Italian conductor Nicola Luisotti, much-admired music director of both international companies, will lead the joint chorus and orchestra of 320 artists onstage at the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco. Joining this extraordinary ensemble will be the four vocal soloists, soprano Leah Crocetto, mezzo-soprano Margaret Mezzacappa (replacing the previously announced Jamie Barton), tenor Michael Fabiano and bass Vitalij Kowaljow.

This unique presentation of the Requiem is offered as part of the worldwide Verdi bicentennial celebration and in recognition of *2013 The Year of Italian Culture in the United States*, an initiative held under the auspices of the president of the Italian Republic.

San Francisco Opera General Director David Gockley commented, “We have been very interested in this project for some time now, and with many thanks to our chorus and orchestra members and their respective unions, we are now proceeding ahead with this extraordinary plan to present no fewer than 320 musical artists onstage for the Requiem. Historically, San Francisco Opera’s roots are in Naples, Italy since the Company’s founder Gaetano Merola was born and trained in that beautiful City by the Bay, and with Nicola Luisotti now musical director of both companies, how fitting it is for our two companies to collaborate. All of us at San Francisco Opera are keenly excited at the prospect of what will surely be a monumental and truly memorable event.”

Rosanna Purchia, director of Teatro di San Carlo said: “The idea of this concert by a group of brave and determined individuals was a dream and will now become a reality. I have never been so proud to serve as the director of the Teatro San Carlo. It will be not only an event in the name of Verdi, but proof that the excellence of our orchestras and choruses can unite the world in the name of music. *Grazie* Maestro Luisotti, *grazie* San Francisco Opera and *grazie* San Carlo.”

Italian Consul-General to San Francisco, the Honorable Mauro Battocchi added, “We are absolutely delighted to be working with San Francisco Opera and the Teatro di San Carlo in this effort to bring about this historic performance, the flagship event of the *Year of Italian Culture* in the San Francisco Bay Area.”

Under the direction of Consul-General Battocchi, a local organizing committee from the Italian-American community, COMITES (Comitato Italiani all’Estero) has been tasked with raising funds in support of bringing the Teatro San Carlo orchestra, chorus and personnel to San Francisco. A highlight of the committee’s fund raising plans call for a black-tie benefit dinner and auction to be held Saturday, June 15 beginning at 6 p.m. at San Francisco’s Fairmont Hotel. Maria Manetti Shrem is honorary chair, while Romana Bracco and Daniela Faggioli chair the event that features a group of newly appointed “honorary ambassadors of Italian culture,” including Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco), California Assemblyman Tom Ammiano, Angela Alioto, Jonathan Moscone and many more.

Underscoring the importance of this burgeoning San Francisco–Naples musical collaboration, a high-level delegation of political and artistic leaders from Naples will attend the June 15 benefit, including very special guest, the Honorable Luigi de Magistris, mayor of the city of Naples and president of Teatro di San Carlo, Salvatore Nastasi, Director General of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, MIBAC Maurizio Maddaloni, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Naples and Vice President of the Teatro di San Carlo. The evening will be further distinguished by entertainment from Nicola Luisotti on piano and Italian tenor Francesco Demuro, who is currently appearing with the Company in *Così fan tutte*. The auction will include authentic stage costumes, original lithographs by

Mimmo Paladino and rare treasures from the Teatro di San Carlo. For details of the June 15 benefit event, visit sfyic.org/gala-dinner-on-june-15-2013/.

Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* premiered in May 1874 in Milan and was composed to commemorate the first anniversary of the death of Alessandro Manzoni, the celebrated Italian writer and one of the leaders of the Italian Risorgimento, the Italian unification movement. Verdi himself conducted the world premiere of one hundred twenty chorus singers and orchestra of one hundred musicians. The work was immediately hailed as a masterpiece and quickly performed in the world's leading music capitals, all to critical and popular acclaim. Verdi's Requiem is set in seven movements: Requiem and Kyrie; Dies Irae; Offertorio; Sanctus; Agnus Dei; Lux aeterna; and Libera me.

At this time, tickets for the October 25, 2013 8 p.m. performance of the Verdi Requiem are currently on sale to San Francisco Opera subscribers only and remaining single tickets will be available to the public beginning August 1. For more information, visit sfoopera.com or call (415) 864-3330.

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Viva L'Italia

**Saturday, June 15, 2013
Fairmont Hotel, 950 Mason Street, San Francisco**

A black-tie gala dinner and auction to benefit the anticipated once-in-a-lifetime performance of the Verdi Requiem featuring the combined orchestras and choruses of San Francisco Opera and Italy's Real Teatro di San Carlo, Naples.

6:00 p.m. Reception and Silent Auction

7:30 p.m. Dinner

Featuring a special performance by San Francisco Opera Music Director Nicola Luisotti and tenor Francesco Demuro. Special guest of honor is Honorable Luigi de Magistris, Mayor of Naples and President of Teatro di San Carlo. Maria Manetti Shrem, Honorary Chair; Romana Bracco and Daniela Faggioli, Co-chairs. Presented by the Consul General of Italy, Mauro Battocchi.

For tickets and more information, visit sfyic.org/gala-dinner-on-june-15-2013.

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About Teatro di San Carlo

The Real Teatro di San Carlo was built in Naples, Italy in 1737, originally commissioned by King Charles VII of Naples. Situated adjacent to the Palazzo Reale, Teatro di San Carlo is Italy's largest opera house as

well as the oldest opera house in Europe. Teatro di San Carlo holds great importance in operatic history and has been host to numerous operatic legends. Gioachino Rossini was house composer and artistic director from 1815 to 1822, during which time he composed ten operas. The theater next appointed Gaetano Donizetti who maintained the post from 1822 to 1838 and composed 16 operas for the theater, among them *Maria Stuarda* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Giuseppe Verdi debuted two operas for the Teatro di San Carlo, *Alzira* and *Luisa Miller*; other important premieres there included Vincenzo Bellini's first opera, *Bianca e Fernando* as well as operas by Giacomo Puccini, Pietro Mascagni and Ruggero Leoncavallo. The company of the Teatro di San Carlo made its American debut at the 1983 Spoleto Festival in Charleston with Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's opera *Il Flaminio*. Nicola Luisotti, a native of Tuscany, was appointed music director of the theater in 2012. For more information, visit teatrosancarlo.it.

About San Francisco Opera

San Francisco Opera is one of the world's leading producers for the lyric theater. Company founder Gaetano Merola was born in Naples, Italy in 1881, the son of a Neapolitan court violinist. He studied piano and conducting at the Naples Conservatory of Music and emigrated to the United States in 1899 to serve as an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera and at the traveling San Carlo Opera Company*. It was while touring with the San Carlo Opera that Merola began making annual visits to San Francisco. In 1922, he decided to stay in the Bay Area to launch a permanent opera company, San Francisco Opera. Merola and Kurt Herbert Adler were the Company's first two general directors. Legendary for both their conducting and managerial skills, these two leaders established a formidable institution that is internationally recognized as one of the top opera companies in the world and heralded for its first-rate productions and roster of international opera stars. David Gockley became San Francisco Opera's sixth general director in January 2006 after more than three decades at the helm of Houston Grand Opera. Nicola Luisotti made his San Francisco Opera debut in 2005 with Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* and became Company Music Director in September 2009. Originally presented over two weeks, the Company's season now contains approximately seventy-five performances of nine operas between September and July in the historic War Memorial Opera House, which was inaugurated on October 15, 1932. For more information, visit sfopera.com.

* No relation to the Teatro di San Carlo of Naples, Italy.

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