



SACRAMENTO OPERA NEWS RELEASE

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SACRAMENTO OPERA

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**SACRAMENTO OPERA OPENS 30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON
WITH HANDEL'S "ORLANDO"**

(Sacramento, CA 09/20/10) **Sacramento Opera opens its 30th Anniversary Season with Handel's *Orlando* at the Community Center Theater, 1301 L Street, Sacramento, Friday, November 19, 2010 at 8 pm and Sunday, November 21, 2010 at 2 pm.** *Orlando* is an opera in three acts, with music by George Frideric Handel. This Sacramento Opera premiere is sung in Italian with projected English supertitles.

All performances feature the **Sacramento Philharmonic Orchestra** and Sacramento Opera Artistic Director and Conductor, **Timm Rolek**. **Frank Kuhn** is the stage director. The cast features **Randall Scotting**, **Céline Ricci**, and **Diana Tash** (all making their Sacramento Opera debuts), as well as **Antoni Mendezona** and **Dean Elzinga**.

Set to an anonymous libretto adapted from Carlo Sigismondo Capece's *L'Orlando*, after Ludovico Ariosto's romantic Italian epic *Orlando furioso*, George Frideric Handel's *Orlando* will be Sacramento Opera's first foray into the Baroque repertoire. The opera received its premiere at the King's Theatre in London on January 27, 1733 and closed after 10 performances due to "artistic differences" between Handel and the opera's star, the castrato known as Senesino who sang the title role. The work received its modern day revival on May 6, 1959 at the Unicorn Theatre in Abingdon, United Kingdom.

Orlando, considered to be one of Handel's "most daring and virtuosic operas," is a tale of a warring knight in service to Charlemagne, who is torn between "the conflicting desires for love and glory." He falls obsessively in love with the pagan princess Angelica, Queen of Cathay. She, in turn, is in love with the African prince, Medoro. Orlando's obsession drives him to madness and he threatens to wreak havoc. But, Zoroastro, a wise sage and magician intercedes and restores Orlando to sanity.

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Sacramento Opera Press Release – *ORLANDO* – P.2

Sacramento Opera's 30th Anniversary Season inaugurates an annual thematic focus over the next four years that will inform both mainstage productions and all outreach programs. The theme for the 2010-2011 season is "Love Makes You Crazy." Handel's *Orlando* is all about "Obsessive Love." Season tickets are now on sale and offer a 20% discount off the single ticket price. For more information, call the Sacramento Opera Subscription Manager, Gene Sirois, at 916.737.1000. For tickets, call 916.808.5181 or visit www.tickets.com. Single tickets are \$18 to \$108.

Sacramento Opera's 30th Anniversary Season is made possible through the generosity of the James Irvine Foundation, Raley's Family of Fine Stores, the County and City of Sacramento's Cultural Arts Award administered by the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, and Mr. Ted DeYoung.

John & Lois Crowe are Production Sponsors of *Orlando*.

Cast of *Orlando*:

Countertenor Randall Scotting (*Orlando*) delights audiences with a blend of commanding stage presence, rich voice, and innate musicality. In the 2009-2010 season Mr. Scotting appeared in Budapest singing the title role in Handel's *Orlando* with the Liszt Ferenc Orchestra, and he will also sing the title role in Handel's *Rinaldo* in Mexico for the Teatro Degollado. He makes his debut with the Minnesota Opera singing the roles of the Coachman and the Fox in the American Premiere of Jonathan Dove's opera *The Adventures of Pinocchio* and he will make his German debut in a series of Opera Gala concerts for the Landestheater Neustrelitz. After singing recitals in several important venues in Hungary, he will return to Germany to sing the role of Ottone in Handel's *Agrippina* for the Landestheater Neustrelitz. In 2008 Mr. Scotting was seen twice at Carnegie Hall, first under the baton of Maestro Ton Koopman in works of Handel, and later in an improvised performance piece with Bobby McFerrin: *The Tower of Babel*. Also in 2008-09 he sang his first Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, and performed the Contemporary music masterwork *Eight Song's for a Mad King* by Peter Maxwell Davies. During the 2006-2007 season Mr. Scotting made his European stage debut as Teseo in the Festival Dei Due Mondi



Sacramento Opera Press Release – ORLANDO – P.3

(Spoleto, Italy) performances of Vivaldi's *Ercole sul Termodonte*, conducted by Alan Curtis with il Complesso Barocco.

Soprano Céline Ricci (Angelica) was born in Florence of Italian and French parents. She studied in Paris with Ana Maria Miranda and continued her post-graduate studies at the prestigious Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. Renowned conductor William Christie selected this gifted artist for his first elite academy, *Les Jardin des Voix*. She was named one of opera's promising new talents by *Opernwelt* magazine and has subsequently gone on to make numerous appearances under the baton of this conductor and his prestigious *Les Arts Florissants* and continues to have engagements with them well into the future. Céline Ricci already has an impressive discography that includes a number of audio recordings and two DVDs. The recent release of the Terradellas' opera *Artaserse*, in which she sings the role of Arbace, garnered a great deal of critical acclaim. In her character's 8-minute aria, *Opernwelt* singled out Ms Ricci's exciting performance as being a "tour de force." She was also described as having "faultless breath control, total security and perfect round tone."

Mezzo-Soprano Diana Tash (Medoro) appears in both operatic roles onstage, and as a featured soloist, most recently gaining popularity in recital with famed pianist Armen Guzelimian. Her varied career has spanned both the soprano and mezzo repertoire. Recent solo performances (with Guzelimian at the piano) include her Carnegie Hall Recital in 2008, and her Los Angeles recital at Zipper Hall in 2006, a live recording of which was released as the full-length CD "Diana Tash In Recital" in March 2009 with LML Records. Her mezzo stage work has been hailed as "radiant" by the LA Times, "stylish" by the San Diego Union and "skillful" by the NY times. Solo work in '09 has included Mendelssohn's Elijah with LA Master Chorale at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, and a rare performance of Leonard Bernstein's Jeremiah (for mezzo-soprano and orchestra) with The Akron Symphony in Ohio. She has performed the Mozart Requiem in '09 and '08, and the Bach Magnificat in '07, all with the Santa Barbara Chorale Society, and covered the mezzo role in John Adam's *El Niño* for the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2005.

Soprano Antoni Mendezona (Dorinda) made her international debut this past winter in Tobias

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Sacramento Opera Press Release – *ORLANDO* – P.4

Picker's *Emmeline* as Sophie as a part of the Mezzo Television Festival in Szeged, Hungary. Other recent credits include Veronique in the New York premiere of Thomas Pasatieri's *The Hotel Casablanca* at Dicapo Opera, La Principessa in Xavier Montsalvatge's *El Gato con Botas* with Gotham Chamber Opera, Frasquita in *Carmen* with Connecticut Grand Opera. She was last seen at Sacramento Opera as Flora in *The Turn of the Screw*. Ms. Mendezona is also an accomplished oratorio and concert performer, having sung with the Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra in Fauré's Requiem, as well as several concerts with the Bach Concert Series in Baltimore.

Bass-Baritone Dean Elzinga (Zoroastro) is regularly welcomed on concert and opera stages, often in 20th-century works requiring his unique dramatic conviction and presence. He enjoyed international acclaim for Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, performing it in New York, Cleveland, Boston and Santa Monica; sang the title role in Harold Farberman's *A Song of Eddie* and Schoenberg's *Die glückliche Hand* at New York's Bard Festival; performed and recorded Elliott Carter's *What next?* in Amsterdam and Turin; and recently enjoyed great success performing Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon* with Peter Serkin and the Brentano String Quartet at New York's 92nd Street Y, as well as on a West Coast tour. Equally at home on the operatic stage, Mr. Elzinga's roles include Mozart's Figaro, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Leporello and Méphistophélès at the Vienna Volksoper; two roles at Des Moines Metro Opera (Nick Shadow in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* and the Four Villains in Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann*); Nilakantha in *The Pearl Fishers* at Calgary Opera; Nick Shadow and Leporello in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at the Edmonton Opera, the Speaker in Mozart's *Magic Flute* with Michigan Opera Theatre, Pittsburgh Opera and at the Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Leonard Slatkin.

Programs and artists are subject to change.

The mission of the Sacramento Opera is to produce outstanding opera, to develop and cultivate a wider public interest in opera and its allied arts, and to further music education in the region.

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