

LA Phil Presents

Press Release

Sunday, July 13, 2008

BRAMWELL TOVEY LEADS THE LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC IN BIZET'S *CARMEN*

**All-Star Cast Includes Mezzo-Soprano Denyce Graves and Tenor Stuart Skelton and Benefits the
Los Angeles Philharmonic Musicians Pension Fund**

SUNDAY, JULY 13, 2008, AT 7:30 PM

Corporate Sponsor: Pasadena Showcase House for the Arts; Media Sponsor: KCET

The Los Angeles Philharmonic presents *Carmen*, starring celebrated mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves at the Hollywood Bowl Sunday, July 13, at 7:30 p.m. Conducted by Bramwell Tovey, the newly appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, a concert version of this timeless opera brings the seduction of Spain and the vivid allure of Seville to the stage. This concert is a benefit for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Musicians Pension Fund.

The passion and tragedy of *Carmen* is enriched by the explosive talent of Denyce Graves. Noted by *The New York Times* as "a strikingly attractive stage presence and a communicative artist," Graves captures audiences with her portrayal of Carmen, a role she has made her own. Fighting for Carmen's affections are tenor Stuart Skelton as Don Jose and baritone Mariusz Kwiecien as Escamillo.

The rest of the cast features some of the opera world's finest artists including Jessica Rivera, Ryan McKinny, Daniel Teadt, Karen Vuong, Fiona Murphy, Philippe Castagner and Daniel Montenegro. The Pacific Chorale and Los Angeles Children's Chorus complete the ensemble.

A musician of striking versatility, **BRAMWELL TOVEY** is acknowledged around the world for his artistic depth and his warm, charismatic personality on the podium. Tovey's career as a conductor is uniquely enhanced by his work as a composer and pianist, lending him a remarkable musical perspective. His tenures as Music Director with the Vancouver Symphony, Luxembourg Philharmonic and Winnipeg Symphony Orchestras have been characterized by his expertise in operatic, choral, British and contemporary repertoire. The 2007/08 season held many highlights for Tovey. A recent recording with violinist James Ehnes brought a 2007 Grammy to the soloist, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and Tovey. In his eighth season with Vancouver, Tovey collaborated with guest artists Ben Heppner and Evelyn Glennie and led the orchestra through an in-depth six-concert Beethoven festival, featuring performances by Lang Lang and Anne-Sophie Mutter. He also appeared with orchestras across East Asia, in the spring of 2008, in advance of the orchestra's fall 2008 tour of China. Prior to his music directorship in Vancouver, Tovey spent 12 years as music director of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, where he founded its highly regarded New Music Festival. A significant milestone in the ensemble's exploration of new music, the festival premiered more than 250 works by diverse international and Canadian composers under Tovey's leadership, with every performance broadcast on Canada's CBC Radio. Additionally in 2004, he founded the New York Philharmonic's Summertime Classics series at Avery Fisher Hall, and presides annually as its host and conductor. An esteemed guest conductor, Tovey has worked with orchestras in the UK and Europe including the London Philharmonic, London Symphony, Bournemouth, the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra and the North Netherlands Symphony in January, where he led the Dutch

premiere of Penderecki's 8th Symphony in 2008. With a profound commitment to new music, Tovey has established himself as a formidable composer. He has been commissioned by the Calgary Opera to compose the company's third original full-length opera. An immense undertaking, the piece will premiere in Calgary in January of 2011. Tovey's other accomplishments as a composer include receiving the Best Canadian Classical Composition 2003 Juno Award for his *Requiem for a Charred Skull*, performed and recorded by the Amadeus Choir and the Hannaford Band in Toronto. Tovey has also built a strong reputation as an accomplished jazz pianist, with two recordings to his name. Renowned as a choral conductor, Tovey has performed works ranging from Mahler's Symphony No. 8 to Bach's Mass in B minor. In opera, his repertoire includes works by Puccini, Strauss, Mozart, Menotti, Poulenc, Britten and Stravinsky. Awarded numerous honorary degrees, Tovey has received a Fellowship from the Royal Academy of Music in London, honorary Doctorates of Law from the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba and Kwantlen University College, as well as a Fellowship from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. In 1999, he received the M. Joan Chalmers National Award for Artistic Direction, a prestigious Canadian prize awarded to premier artists for outstanding contributions in professional performing arts organizations.

DENYCE GRAVES, recognized worldwide as one of today's most exciting vocal stars, continues to gather unparalleled popular and critical acclaim in performances on four continents. *USA Today* identifies her as "an operatic superstar of the 21st Century." Her career has taken her to the world's great opera houses and concert halls. Denyce Graves has become particularly well-known to operatic audiences for her portrayals of the title roles in *Carmen* and *Samson et Dalila*. These signature roles have brought Graves to such great venues as the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna Staatsoper, Royal Opera and Los Angeles Opera. In 2007/08, Graves sings the role of Baba the Turk in a Robert Lepage production of *The Rake's Progress* at San Francisco Opera, makes her Hong Kong debut as Charlotte in *Werther* at Hong Kong Opera, and appears in the title role of *Carmen* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. She also travels internationally making extensive tours of concerts, recitals and masterclasses. Graves made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in the 1995/96 season in the title role of *Carmen*. She returned the following season to lead the new Franco Zeffirelli production of this work, conducted by James Levine, and she sang the opening night performance of the Metropolitan Opera's 1997/98 season as Carmen opposite Plácido Domingo.

STUART SKELTON has emerged as one of the finest heroic tenors of his generation with performances on leading concert and operatic stages spanning from his native Australia to Asia, Europe, and North America. His repertoire encompasses many of opera's most challenging roles from Wagner's Parsifal, Lohengrin, Erik and Siegmund, to Strauss's Kaiser, Beethoven's Florestan, Saint-Saëns' Samson, Dvorák's Dimitrij, and Britten's Peter Grimes. He is acclaimed for his beautiful voice, outstanding musicianship, and his intensely dramatic portrayals. In the 2007/08 season, Stuart Skelton joins the roster of the Metropolitan Opera in its production of *Die Walküre* and debuts at the Bayerische Staatsoper as Max in *Der Freischütz* and at Palm Beach Opera as Florestan in *Fidelio*. He returns to the Deutsche Oper Berlin in the title role of *Lohengrin* and sings Mitch in André Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Opera Australia in a new production by the acclaimed film director Bruce Beresford. Skelton made his English National Opera debut in the 2006/07 season as Laca in a David Alden production of *Jenufa* and other appearances of the season included San Francisco Opera performances of Don José in *Carmen*, Max in *Der Freischütz* and the Kaiser in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* for the Staatsoper Hamburg under the baton of Simone Young.

JESSICA RIVERA is hailed by *The New York Times* as a "vocally luminous young soprano," and quickly establishing herself as one of the most creatively inspired vocal artists of her generation. Recent engagements include performances and the Telarc recording of Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra under Robert Spano, her Boston Symphony Orchestra debut under David Robertson in Adams' *El Niño*, Handel's *Messiah* and Vivaldi's *Gloria* under Norman Mackenzie

with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. Over recent years Rivera has enjoyed a warm artistic relationship with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, a highlight of which has been singing Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* with conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen in the orchestra's inaugural season at Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Polish baritone **MARIUSZ KWIECIEN** is recognized worldwide as one of the leading baritones before the public today. Known for his handsome voice, incisive musicianship and captivating stage presence, he performs with the foremost opera companies and symphony orchestras in Europe, North America and Asia. As an alumnus of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Program, Kwiecien has a long standing relationship with the Metropolitan Opera and in recent seasons he has sung Marcello in *La bohème*, Silvio in *I pagliacci*, and Malatesta in a new production of *Don Pasquale*. Under the baton of James Levine, he has sung Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*. He has also worked with Maestro Levine both at the Tanglewood Festival, singing the title role in *Don Giovanni* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and at Carnegie Hall with members of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in a performance of Bach's Cantata No. 82, Ravel's *Don Quichotte* songs, and Brahms' *Liebeslieder Waltzer*. Kwiecien was heard at the Metropolitan Opera with performances of Enrico in a new production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* and was also heard in recital across the country.

Bass-baritone **RYAN McKINNY** began the 2007/08 season with performances of Sam in *Un ballo in maschera* with Houston Grand Opera and will return later in the season as Flint in *Billy Budd*. McKinny also made his Los Angeles Opera debut as Montano in *Otello* and Ein Bedentier in Ullmann's *Der zerbrochene Krug*, both under the baton of Maestro James Conlon. This summer, McKinny will be seen at Wolf Trap as Barone di Kelbar in Verdi's *Un giorno di regno*, Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Berkshire Opera, bass-baritone soloist in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the National Symphony Orchestra, and Zuniga in a concert performance of *Carmen* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. Next season, McKinny will be heard with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in *Oedipus rex* as Creon, Tiresias, and the Messenger in a concert staged by Peter Sellars. He will return to Houston Grand Opera as Don Pedro in *Béatrice et Bénédict* and Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and make his debut with Utah Opera as Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro*.

This season, baritone **DANIEL TEADT** sang the Count in the Aix-en-Provence Festival's 2007 production of *Le nozze di Figaro* in Luxembourg, and made his debuts at the Opera Company of Philadelphia in their production of *Cyrano* and with the London Symphony Orchestra in performances of *Billy Budd*. He recently made his debut at the Arizona Opera as the Count in a new production of *Le nozze di Figaro* directed by Sir Thomas Allen. An alumnus of the Pittsburgh Opera Center, his roles there included Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the title role in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, Fiorello in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Moralès in *Carmen*, and Curio in *Giulio Cesare*.

American soprano **KAREN VUONG** studied at UCLA and was a participant in the Domingo-Thornton LA Opera Young artist program for two years. Vuong's debut season at LA Opera included the Voice of Shepherd Boy in *Tannhäuser*, Lady of Mahagonny in *The Rise and Fall the City of Mahagonny*, Amore in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Pousette (cover) in *Manon*, and Mimi in *La bohème* under the direction of Plácido Domingo. Upcoming engagements include Lay Sister in *Suor Angelica* at LA Opera, and Sophie in *Werther* at Kentucky Opera.

FIONA MURPHY is a graduate of University College Dublin and the Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia. She has been a member of the Houston Grand Opera Studio for the past three years. Recent engagements include appearances with the Wolf Trap Opera Company singing Stephano and Eurydice (Telemann's *Orpheus*), the title role in *Carmen* with the Lyric Opera Productions Dublin and Minerva in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* with Chicago Opera Theatre conducted by Jane Glover. Future engagements include the role of Valencienne in *The Merry Widow*, Lola in *Cavalleria rusticana* and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*

at English National Opera.

Canadian-American tenor **PHILIPPE CASTAGNER** has appeared with the Metropolitan, New York City, Bilbao, Vancouver and Arizona Opera companies, the New York Philharmonic, Boston, St. Louis, Pittsburgh and Dallas Symphony Orchestras, and in recital at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall, the 92nd Street Y, Washington's Terrace Theater and Boston's Gardner Museum. He last sang at the Hollywood Bowl in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Michael Tilson Thomas and also sang the work with Gustavo Dudamel and the Simón Bolívar Orchestra in Caracas. This summer he reprises his performance of Hylas in Berlioz's *Les Troyens* with the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood.

DANIEL MONTENEGRO, tenor and a Southern California native, has traveled the world performing on stages ranging from the Sydney Opera House in Australia to the Kodak Theater in Hollywood. This current season, Daniel is back with the Los Angeles Opera for three productions: In Puccini's *La Rondine* covering Prunier, as the Italian lover in *Il Tabarro* and in Bizet's *Carmen* as El Dancaïro. Though opera is his passion, Daniel is also equally at home on the concert stage. He is a featured member of The American Tenors. Daniel is a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

PACIFIC CHORALE, founded in 1968, is internationally recognized for exceptional artistic expression, stimulating American-focused programming, and influential education programs. Comprised of 140 professional and volunteer singers, the Chorale has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic on numerous occasions. Pacific Chorale presents a substantial season at the Orange County Performing Arts Center. Under the guidance of Artistic Director John Alexander and Assistant Conductor Robert M. Istad, Pacific Chorale has infused an Old World art form with California's hallmark innovation and cultural independence.

LOS ANGELES CHILDREN'S CHORUS, under Artistic Director Anne Tomlinson, has become recognized throughout the country for its exceptional artistic quality and technical ability. Founded in 1986, LACC currently performs with such leading musical ensembles as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the Pasadena Symphony. LACC also assists the Los Angeles Opera by providing and training children for its opera productions that require a children's chorus or child soloists. LACC's 2007/08 roster includes 260 choristers from 60 communities across Los Angeles in five choirs: Concert, Chamber Singers, Intermediate, Apprentice and Preparatory. LACC's Associate Artistic Director Mandy Brigham handled musical preparation for this performance.

One of the largest natural amphitheaters in the world, with a seating capacity of nearly 18,000, the HOLLYWOOD BOWL has been the summer home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic since its official opening in 1922, and in 1991 gave its name to the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, a resident ensemble that has filled a special niche in the musical life of Southern California. The 2004 season introduced audiences to a revitalized Hollywood Bowl, featuring a newly-constructed shell and stage and the addition of four stadium screens enhancing stage views in the venue. To this day, \$1 buys a seat at the top of the Bowl for many of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's concerts. While the Bowl is best known for its sizzling summer nights, during the day California's youngest patrons enjoy "SummerSounds: Music for Kids at the Hollywood Bowl," the Southland's most popular summer arts festival for children, now in its 40th season. Attendance figures over the past several decades have soared: in 1980 the Bowl first topped the half-million mark and close to one million admissions have been recorded. In February 2008, the Hollywood Bowl was named Best Major Outdoor Concert Venue for the fourth year in a row at the 19th Annual Pollstar Concert Industry Awards. The Bowl's summer music festival has become as much a part of a Southern California summer as beaches and barbecues, the Dodgers, and Disneyland.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

SUNDAY, JULY 13, 2008, at 7:30PM

HOLLYWOOD BOWL, 2301 N. Highland Ave. in Hollywood

BIZET'S CARMEN

LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC
BRAMWELL TOVEY, conductor
DENYCE GRAVES, Carmen
STUART SKELTON, Don José
JESSICA RIVERA, Miciaëla
MARIUSZ KWIECIEN, Escamillo
RYAN McKINNY, Zuniga
DANIEL TEADT, Moralès
KAREN VUONG, Frasquita
FIONA MURPHY, Mercédès
PHILIPPE CASTAGNER, El Dancaïro
DANIEL MONTENEGRO, El Remendado
PACIFIC CHORALE
JOHN ALEXANDER, artistic director
ROBERT M. ISTAD, chorus master
LOS ANGELES CHILDREN'S CHORUS
ANNE TOMLINSON, artistic director

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Tickets (\$10 - \$114) are on sale now at HollywoodBowl.com, at the Hollywood Bowl Box Office (Tuesday–Sunday, noon–6 p.m.), by phone 323.850.2000 or by calling Ticketmaster at 213.480.3232, and at all Ticketmaster outlets. Groups of 10 or more may be eligible for a 20% discount, subject to availability; call 323.850.2050 for further details.

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