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Verdi's First Masterpiece, *Nabucco*, Returns to San Diego After 29 Years

*American baritone Richard Paul Fink and American bass Raymond Aceto
make Company debuts*

French soprano Sylvie Valayre returns to sing her signature role

San Diego, CA – San Diego Opera's 45th International Season continues with *Nabucco*, the second opera of the season which opens on Saturday, February 20, 2010. Considered to be Verdi's first masterpiece, *Nabucco* has not been performed in San Diego since 1981.

Nabucco features the long-awaited return of American baritone **Richard Paul Fink** as the Babylonian king Nabucco and the debut of American bass **Raymond Aceto** as the Hebrew High Priest Zaccaria. Returning after making her debut as Tosca last season is French soprano **Sylvie Valayre** who sings her signature role of Nabucco's adopted daughter, Abigaille. American tenor **Arthur Shen** also makes a Company debut as the Hebrew Ismaele. Rounding out the cast is Israeli mezzo soprano **Susanna Poretsky** as Nabucco's younger daughter, Fenena, American bass baritone **Alfred Walker** as the High Priest of Baal, Taiwanese tenor **Joseph Hu** as the Babylonian soldier Adballo and Indian-born soprano **Priti Gandhi** as Zaccaria's sister Anna. Italian conductor **Edoardo Müller** brings his mastery of the Italian repertoire to the podium and San Diego Opera favorite, the Iranian stage director **Lotfi Mansouri**, directs the action on stage.

Nabucco was last performed by San Diego Opera in 1981. The sets and costumes are owned by the Lyric Opera of Chicago. The sets were designed by **Michael Yeargan**. The costumes were designed by **Jane Greenwood**.

Performed in Italian with English translations above the stage, *Nabucco* begins with an assault on Jerusalem by Nabucco's army. The Jews have taken Fenena, Nabucco's youngest daughter, hostage in an attempt to keep his armies at bay. Fenena is entrusted to Ismaele, the son of the King of Jerusalem, but the two of them are in love. Leading Nabucco's armies is his elder daughter, Abigaille, who also loves Ismaele. When Nabucco arrives at the Temple, the high priest Zaccaria threatens to kill Fenena but Ismaele intervenes to save her. In the ensuing chaos Nabucco orders the temple destroyed and Isamaele is branded a traitor by the Jews. The Jews now in exile, Abigaille discovers she is not Nabucco's true daughter and plots a coup to place

herself on the throne by overthrowing Fenena who has converted to Judaism and has helped reconcile Ismaele with the Jews. Meanwhile, Nabucco has visions of grandeur and declares himself a god. He is hit by a lightning bolt and knocked senseless. Abigaille issues a decree of death for the Jews including Fenena but Nabucco, still weakened by the lightning bolt, pleads for his younger daughter's life but regains his strength and reason at the sight of Fenena being led to her death in chains. Nabucco asks the Jews for forgiveness and commits a final act that will free them. Filled with a gripping plot, and some of the most beautiful music ever composed, including the famed chorus of the Hebrew slaves "Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate" ("Fly, thought, on golden wings") *Nabucco* will dazzle San Diego Opera audiences.

Pre-production photos can be found online at:

<http://www.sdopera.com/Company/News/PressKits>

Electronic Press Kits for this opera, including multimedia content can be found online at:

<http://www.sdopera.com/Company/News/PressKits>

The Cast

Richard Paul Fink, Nabucco

American baritone Richard Paul Fink made his San Diego Opera debut as Pritschitsch in *The Merry Widow* in 1985, returning for Zaretski in *Eugene Onegin* in 1985 and Escamillo in *Carmen* in 1992. Notable engagements in his international career include, Klingsor in *Parsifal*, Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*, George Wilson in *The Great Gatsby* and Edward Teller in *Doctor Atomic* at The Metropolitan Opera, Alberich in the Ring Cycle for The Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin and San Francisco Opera, Amonasro in *Aida*, Jochanaan in *Salome* and Don Pizarro in *Fidelio* for Seattle Opera, Telramund in *Lohngerin* for Houston Grand Opera and the Water Sprite in *Rusalka* for Canadian Opera Company. He has appeared with Paris Opéra Bastille, Berlin Staatsoper, the Salzburg Festival, Teatro Real in Madrid, Teatro Municipal in Chile, Washington National Opera, Hamburgische Staatsoper, Sydney Opera and New York City Opera in roles as varied as Nabucco, Macbeth, Rigoletto, the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Iago in *Otello*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, Gerard in *Andrea Chenier* and Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*.

Sylvie Valayre, Abigaille

French soprano Sylvia Valayre made her company debut last season in the title role of *Tosca*. She is well known for her portrayals of Lady Macbeth in Verdi's *Macbeth*, Abigaille in *Nabucco*, and the title roles of *Norma*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Gioconda* and *Salome* which she has sung at all the world's major houses. She received international attention with her debut at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden for *Nabucco*. She has sung several roles at the Metropolitan Opera including her debut as Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly*, Maddalena di Coigny in *Andrea Chenier* and the title role of *Tosca* which she has also performed in Zurich, Berlin, Washington, Rome, Bologna, Paris, Tokyo and Vienna. Recent engagements include Lady Macbeth for the Glyndebourne Festival, *Tosca* for Opéra National de Paris and *Nabucco* for Deutsche Oper Berlin. Valayre debuted at the Teatro alla Scala in *La Gioconda*, at Lyric Opera of Chicago as *Tosca*, at San Francisco Opera in *Madama Butterfly*, at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich in the title role of *Aida*, at Opernhaus Zurich and at the Bolshoi Opera in Moscow in *Nabucco*. She sings in concert throughout Europe and has appeared with all the major Paris orchestras, with Radio France and at the Montpellier Festival.

Raymond Aceto, Zaccaria

San Diego Opera debut. American bass Raymond Aceto has sung many roles for Lyric Opera of Chicago including Comte des Grieux in *Manon*, the High Priest in *Nabucco*, Banquo in *Macbeth*, Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, Fafner in *Das Rheingold*, the Old Hebrew in *Samson and Delilah*, Nourabad in *The Pearl Fishers*, Alaska Wolf Joe in *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* and Ramfis in *Aida*. Other performances include Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Zaccaria in *Nabucco*, the King in *Aida* for Metropolitan Opera, Escamillo in *Carmen* for Los Angeles Opera, Monterone in *Rigoletto*, Banquo in *Macbeth* and the King in *Aida* for San Francisco Opera, Escamillo in *Carmen* and Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Deutsche Oper Berlin, Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra*, Pimen in *Boris Godunov*, Seneca in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* for Houston Grand Opera, Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* and Ferrando in *Il trovatore* for Covent Garden, the role of Ramfis in *Aida* for Vienna Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper Berlin and Arena di Verona, and as Ferrando with Madrid's Teatro Real. Aceto was awarded Richard Tucker Foundation Career Grants and a Sullivan Foundation Award and can be heard in the role of Capellio in Teldec's recording of *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*.

Arthur Shen, Ismaele

San Diego Opera debut. American tenor Arthur Shen has been a resident of Germany's Staatstheatre Braunschweig for three seasons, appearing in roles such as the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Rodolfo in *La bohème*, Alfredo in *La traviata*, the singer in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, Don José in *Carmen*, Gabriele in *Simon Boccanegra* and Des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut*. Other recent engagements include Radames in *Aida* with Utah Festival Opera, Manrico in *Il trovatore* with Utah Festival Opera, Alfredo in *La traviata* with Martinez Opera, Rodolfo in *La bohème* with National Lyric Opera and Des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut*, Roberto in *Le Villi* and Camille in *The Merry Widow* with Dicapo Opera Theatre. He is an active concert recitalist and is also a winner of the Richard F. Gold Career Grant.

Susana Poretsky, Fenena

Israeli mezzo soprano Susana Poretsky made her San Diego Opera debut in 2007 as Margret in *Wozzeck* and returned in 2008 as Anna in *Mary, Queen of Scots (Maria Stuarda)*. Recent performances include Verdi's *Requiem* with the Washington Concert Chorus, Pauline in *Pique Dame* at the Saito Kinen Festival, a soloist for *Russian Seasons* with the Royal Danish Ballet as well as with the New York City Ballet. Other performances include Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* and Pauline with Los Angeles Opera, Pauline with Washington National Opera, the title role of *Carmen* with Fort Worth Opera, concert performances of *Mlada* with the San Francisco Symphony and Maddalena in *Rigoletto* with the Metropolitan Opera, among others. European engagements include Adalgisa in *Norma* and Charlotte in *Werther* with the Royal Swedish Opera, Fenena at the Arena di Verona, *Carmen* with Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels and Dryade in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at La Scala. Also active on the concert stage, she has appeared with every major orchestra in Israel.

Alfred Walker, High Priest of Baal

American bass baritone Alfred Walker made his Company debut in 2006 as Achilla in *Julius Caesar in Egypt* and returned in the season opener *La bohème* as Colline. Recent notable performances include the title role of *The Flying Dutchman* at Theatre Basel, Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde* at Angers Nantes Opera, Parsi Rustomji in *Satyagraha* at the Metropolitan Opera and Orest in *Elektra* with Seattle Opera, Deutsche Opera Berlin, La Scala, as well as at the San Sebastian Festival and Aix-en-Provence Festival. Other performances include Porgy in *Porgy & Bess* with Los Angeles Opera, the Four Villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Méphistophélès in *Faust* with Tulsa Opera, Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* with Minnesota Opera and Utah Opera, Colline with Atlanta Opera, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with Opera North and Donner in *Das*

Rheingold with New Orleans Opera. His appearances at the Metropolitan Opera include *Romeo and Juliette*, *Samson and Delilah*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Les Troyens* and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*. He is an active concert artist and has appeared with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the American Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, among others.

Joseph Hu, Adballo

Taiwanese tenor Joseph Hu made his San Diego Opera debut as Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 1995. His many performances here include Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, Spoletta in *Tosca*, the Steersman in *The Flying Dutchman*, Roderigo in *Otello*, Pong in *Turandot*, Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Count Lerma in *Don Carlo*, the Messenger in *Samson and Delilah*, Ruiz and the Messenger in *Il trovatore*, Don Curzio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Spoletta in *Tosca* and Borsa in *Rigoletto*. Among other companies with which he has sung are The Dallas Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Kentucky Opera, Nashville Opera, Fort Worth Opera and Dayton Opera and his international debut at New Israeli Opera.

Priti Gandhi, Anna

Indian-born soprano Priti Gandhi made her San Diego Opera debut as the Mexican Woman in *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 2000, returning for roles in *The Magic Flute*, *Otello*, *Katya Kabanova*, *Il trovatore*, *Aida*, and *Peter Grimes*. Recent appearances include the role debut of Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* with Caramoor International Music Festival, her New York Philharmonic debut in *Elektra* at Lincoln Center, Waltraute in *Die Walküre* with Paris Châtelet, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* at the Theatre of the Estates in Prague, *Carmen* at New York City Opera, the title role of *La Cenerentola* at Dayton Opera and Opera Company of North Carolina, *The Magic Flute* with Opera Pacific, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* with Austin Lyric Opera, Mallika in *Lakmé* with Michigan Opera Theatre and Tulsa Opera, the High Priestess in *Aida* and Echo in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Seattle Opera, *Gypsy Princess* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* for Lyric Opera San Diego, and her Los Angeles Opera debut in the Grammy award-winning *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. Upcoming appearances include a Valkyrie in San Francisco Opera's Ring Cycle this summer, and her role debut as Countess in San Antonio Opera's *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 2011.

Lotfi Mansouri, Director

Persian born director Lotfi Mansouri is the former General Director of San Francisco Opera and the Canadian Opera and made his San Diego Opera debut in 1973 directing *The Daughter of the Regiment*. Recent productions here include *Rigoletto* in 2009, *Cavalleria rusticana / Pagliacci* in 2008, *Boris Godunov* and *Samson and Delilah* in 2007, *The Barber of Seville* in 2006, *Die Fledermaus* and *Simon Boccanegra* in 2005 along with *Don Carlo*, *Turandot*, *Otello* and *Idomeneo: King of Crete* in previous seasons. He attended UCLA and took U.S. citizenship before becoming resident stage director at Opernhaus Zurich in 1976. He has directed at many opera houses throughout Italy including Teatro alla Scala, Milan. In North America, his work has been seen at the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera and in Chicago, Houston, Santa Fe, Philadelphia, Dallas and many other cities, and he has a lengthy association with Opera Australia at the Sydney Opera House. Six of his productions have been videotaped for telecast and commercial sale: *Mefistofele*, *Orlando furioso*, *Capriccio*, *Turandot*, *The Dangerous Liaisons* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. In 2009, Mansouri was a recipient of a 2009 NEA Opera Honor in the category of General Director.

Edoardo Müller, Conductor

Italian conductor Edoardo Müller, has led more than 30 productions in San Diego, beginning in 1980 with *Giovanna d'Arco*. Last season he conducted *Tosca*, *Rigoletto* and *Madama Butterfly*. Known worldwide for his mastery of the Italian operatic repertoire, he has enjoyed a long

association with the Teatro alla Scala in Milan where he conducted *Aida*, *I due Foscari*, *Il trovatore*, *I masnadieri*, *La forza del destino*, *Ernani*, *The Barber of Seville* and *Anna Bolena*, among others. His career has taken him to the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro Municipal in Santiago, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Seattle Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, The Dallas Opera, Cincinnati Opera as well as companies in Paris, Rome and Tokyo.

Michael Yeargan, Set Designer

American Scenic Designer Michael Yeargan made his debut with San Diego Opera with a production of *Aida* first seen in 1996 and repeated in 2001 and 2008. For San Diego Opera he also designed *Madama Butterfly* in 1998, 2003 and 2009, *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 2000, *Cold Sassy Tree* in 2001 and *Carmen* in 2006. Yeargan has won two Tony Awards® for Best Scenic Design for *The Light in the Piazza* in 2005 and *South Pacific* in 2008. He is a professor of stage design at the Yale School of Drama and the resident designer for the Yale Repertory Theatre, where he has designed more than 50 productions. His opera credits include set design for Harbison's *The Great Gatsby* for Metropolitan Opera, Bolcom's *A View from the Bridge* for Lyric Opera of Chicago and both *Simon Boccanegra* and *Dead Man Walking* for San Francisco Opera. He has also designed productions for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Welsh National Opera, Frankfurt Opera, Opera Australia and the Scottish Opera. In 2009, he was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Scenic Design for *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*.

Jane Greenwood, Costume Designer

San Diego Opera debut. British Costume Designer Jane Greenwood began work at the Oxford Playhouse, in charge of the costume department and then in the Ray Diffen costume shop in New York City. Her work includes designing for over 100 productions, from her first Broadway play *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe* (1963), to *Hamlet* with Richard Burton (1964), to *The Sisters Rosensweig* (1993) to Stephen Sondheim's *Passion*. In addition to her many Broadway credits, she has designed costumes for many productions for the Manhattan Theatre Club, *Accent on Youth* for Lincoln Center Theatre, *Belle Epoque*, *Waiting for Godot*, *A Month in the Country* (Outer Critics Circle Award nomination) and *She Loves Me*. Her television work includes several Public Television plays for "The American Playhouse", made-for-television movies, such as *In the Gloaming*, HBO and the miniseries *Kennedy*. For opera, she has designed for the Metropolitan Opera such as *Ariadne* and for dance, she designed the original costumes for Alvin Ailey's *Night Creature*. She teaches at the Yale Drama School, has been nominated for several Tony® Awards and the Olivier Award, received Lucille Lortel Awards as well as the Theater Development Fund Irene Sharaff Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Michael Whitfield, Lighting Designer

Canadian Michael Whitfield made his company debut in 2006 designing *The Barber of Seville*, returned in 2008 for *Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci* and earlier this season for *La bohème*. He has designed for many prestigious opera companies including L'Opera de Montréal, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, The Dallas Opera and Los Angeles Opera. He has designed lighting for over 70 productions at the Canadian Opera Company since 1979, including *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *The Queen of Spades* and *Death in Venice*. During his over 25 years as Resident Lighting Director for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival of Canada he has lit over 100 productions including *The Trojan Women*, *Fuente Ovejuna*, *King Lear*, *Othello* and *The Mikado* (including the 1984 engagement of London's The Old Vic). Whitfield has also designed for numerous theatres, ballet companies and for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

About the Production Sponsors

These performances of *Nabucco* are made possible by the **Lead Sponsors Andrew and Erna Viterbi**, in the memory of **Title Sponsors Charmaine and Maurice C. Kaplan** and **Producer Circle Members Shelia and Jeffrey Lipinski**.

Performance Schedule

Saturday	February 20, 2010	7 PM
Tuesday	February 23, 2010	7 PM
Friday	February 26, 2010	8 PM
Sunday	February 28, 2010	2 PM

Get Connected For *Nabucco*

Artists' Roundtable

Meet the singers, conductor and director of *Nabucco* in this free and informal panel discussion on **Thursday, February 11, 2010 at 5:30 PM** in the Beverly Sills Salon, Civic Theatre. Free.

Pre- Opera Lectures

These 30-minute informative lectures take place in the Civic Theatre one-hour prior to every performance and offer wonderful insight into the production audience members are about to see. These lectures are free to all ticket holders.

San Diego OperaTalk! with Nick Reveles

Join Dr. Nicolas Reveles, San Diego Opera's Geisel Director of Education, for a fascinating half-hour television program on *Nabucco*. Viewers will learn about the story, music and history of each opera and will pick up rich insight into the structure and composition of the music. *OperaTalk! with Nick Reveles* airs on UCSD-TV. For a complete listing of schedules and where to view it visit: <http://www.sdopera.com/Company/Education/OperaTalk>

San Diego Opera Spotlight

Produced by San Diego Opera and UCSD-TV, the award-winning *San Diego Opera Spotlight* program gives viewers a unique and entertaining look behind-the-scenes of each of San Diego Opera's four main-stage productions. Viewers will see how the singers, directors, conductor and crew work together to create each opera, get a sneak peak at rehearsal footage and hear exclusive interviews with the stars. *San Diego Opera Spotlight* repeats daily throughout the run of the production. For a complete listing of schedules and where to view it visit: <http://www.sdopera.com/Company/Education/Spotlight>

San Diego Opera Podcast Series

In order to help audiences better appreciate the operas in our 2010 International Season, the Education and Outreach Department has developed a series of introductory podcasts hosted by Dr. Nicolas Reveles. These 15 to 20 minute 'conversations' can be enjoyed by opera fans as well as those who are new to the art form. Informal yet informative, this is a great way to prepare for our season. <http://www.sdopera.com/Company/Education/Podcasts>

San Diego Opera Blog: Aria Serious

Aria Serious is San Diego Opera's official blog. It focuses on the serious and not-so-serious world of opera with behind-the-scenes looks at our productions, artist interviews and industry as well as pop-culture news. Come and join in the conversation at: <http://ariaserious.blogspot.com/>

San Diego Opera on Facebook

San Diego Opera's Facebook page offers a place for fellow opera fans to discuss performances, connect with other fans and get up-to-date information on upcoming events. Look for "San Diego Opera" at <http://www.facebook.com/>

San Diego Opera on YouTube

Now viewers can watch a large portion of San Diego Opera's programming at their convenience on YouTube. *OperaTalk!*, The Artist Roundtables and much more can be found on the San Diego Opera channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/SanDiegoOpera>

San Diego Opera on Twitter

Get real-time frequent updates about San Diego Opera by following us on Twitter. Follow tweets from backstage during a performance and learn about special offers and contests before anyone else by following us @_SanDiegoOpera.

Purchasing Tickets

Three and four-opera subscriptions for the 2010 International Season are now available. Regular subscriptions range from \$90 - \$720 (some Saturday subscriptions slightly higher) and can be purchased by calling (619) 533-7000 or online at www.sdopera.com. Senior citizen discount packages are available for full-season Tuesday night subscribers. Call (619) 533-7000 for more information.

For information about single ticket availability and prices please visit www.sdopera.com or call (619) 533-7000 to speak to an opera representative.

The 2010 International Season

<i>La bohème</i>	Giacomo Puccini	January 30, February 2, 5 and 7 (mat), 2010
<i>Nabucco</i>	Giuseppe Verdi	February 20, 23, 26 and 28 (mat), 2010
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Charles Gounod	March 13, 16, 19 and 21 (mat), 2010
<i>La traviata</i>	Giuseppe Verdi	April 17, 20, 23 and 25 (mat), 2010

General Information

A widely respected member of the international opera community, *San Diego Opera* brings the world's finest artists to San Diego. Founded in 1965, and led for the last 26 years by General Director and Artistic Director Ian D. Campbell, San Diego Opera produces performances of the highest artistic quality while remaining financially stable.

www.sdopera.com