



For immediate release
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Cast Change Announcement – San Diego Opera

American tenor and San Diego Opera favorite, Richard Leech, returns to sing Don José in San Diego Opera’s upcoming Carmen.

San Diego, CA – American tenor Richard Leech, a longtime San Diego Opera favorite, has cleared his schedule and will sing the role of Don José in *Carmen* which opens on May 14, 2011 for four performances. Richard replaces Salvatore Licitra who has withdrawn from these performances due to the recurrence of a serious back injury. He has also canceled a scheduled concert with the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra. Salvatore will now make his Company debut as Radames in *Aida* in the 2013 season.

Richard Leech’s first Don José in *Carmen* was with San Diego Opera in 1997 and he has since sung the role at Vienna State Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago and The Metropolitan Opera, among others. He made his San Diego Opera debut in 1988 as *Faust*, returning in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Werther*, *La bohème*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Masked Ball*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Verdi Requiem*. Since his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1989 as Rodolfo in *La bohème*, he has given more than 170 performances there in *Faust*, *Rigoletto*, *A Masked Ball*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Madama Butterfly*, *The Elixir of Love*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Tosca*, and *Mefistofele*.

“When Richard heard of our need for a Don José, he quickly adjusted his schedule to return to San Diego. He will be the perfect balance for his colleagues including Georgian mezzo soprano Nino Surguladze as Carmen, soprano Talise Trevigne as Micaëla and baritone Wayne Tigges as Escamillo. I am delighted to add him to this strong cast, conducted by Edoardo Müller and directed by Sonja Frisell. He told me how much he

looks forward to meeting many long-time friends among the audiences for *Carmen*,” adds San Diego Opera General and Artistic Director Ian Campbell.

Carmen opens Saturday, May 14, 2011 for four performances and was last performed by San Diego Opera in 2006.

A more detailed bio for Richard Leech follows.

As a leading tenor with the Metropolitan Opera, Mr. Leech appeared at the company for 17 consecutive seasons from his greatly heralded 1989 debut as Rodolfo in *La bohème*. In addition to Rodolfo, Mr. Leech has sung the leading tenor roles in eleven other operas at the Met and has been heard on many Saturday broadcasts of *Tosca*, *Carmen*, *Faust*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Rigoletto*, *A Masked Ball*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *The Elixir of Love*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and *Mefistofele*.

Balancing his U.S. and European engagements, recent seasons have brought Mr. Leech to the Kremlin in Moscow for the Franco Zeffirelli production of *I Pagliacci*, to Berlin and San Diego as Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, the Vienna State Opera as Don José in *Carmen* and Rodolfo in *La bohème*, to Barcelona as Pinkerton, the Pittsburgh Opera as Canio in *I Pagliacci*, to Amsterdam as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, to Berlin as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, to Cincinnati as *Faust* and Alfredo in *La traviata*. This season Mr. Leech performed Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at the Atlanta Opera, the title role in *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Las Palmas, and Turiddu in *Cavalleria rusticana* at the Houston Grand Opera.

In addition to the Metropolitan Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the opera companies of San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington, and San Diego, Mr. Leech enjoys a career that has regularly taken him to the Opera National de Paris, Covent Garden, the Wiener Staatsoper, Teatro alla Scala, Florence’s Teatro Comunale, and the Deutsche Oper Berlin. In concert, Mr. Leech has distinguished himself with the Vienna Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic, as well as the National and Montreal Symphonies, among many others.

A number of Mr. Leech’s performances have been televised, including the new production of *Madama Butterfly*, the James Levine 25th Anniversary Gala; both at the Met, a “Live from Lincoln Center” *Rigoletto* with the New York City Opera, and many other appearances on the annual Richard Tucker Music Foundation Gala. In 1995 Mr. Leech had the distinct honor of singing for President Clinton and the First Family at the lighting of the National Christmas Tree, along with Aretha Franklin and Trisha Yearwood. Mr. Leech was the recipient of the prestigious Richard Tucker Award in 1989, and the Voice Foundation’s “Voice Education, Research, and Awareness” (VERA) Award.

Carmen Performance Schedule

Saturday	May 14, 2011	7 PM
Tuesday	May 17, 2011	7 PM
Friday	May 20, 2011	8 PM

Sunday May 22, 2011 2 PM

Purchasing Tickets

Single tickets for all operas are now on sale. Single ticket prices start at \$35 and can be purchased by calling (619) 533-7000 or online at www.sdopera.com.

The 2011 International Season

<i>Turandot</i>	Giacomo Puccini	January 29, February 1, 4 and 6 (mat), 2011
<i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>	Richard Strauss	April 3 (mat), 6, 9 and 12, 2011
<i>Faust</i>	Charles Gounod	April 23, 26, 29 and May 1 (mat), 2011
<i>Carmen</i>	Georges Bizet	May 14, 17, 20 and 22 (mat), 2011

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 27 years by General Director and Artistic Director Ian D. Campbell, San Diego Opera produces performances of the highest artistic quality while remaining financially stable.

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