

**For Immediate Release
February 13, 2012**

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Illness causes conductor Karen Keltner to withdraw from conducting Jake Heggie's and Gene Scheer's *Moby-Dick*

Maestro Joseph Mechavich, who just conducted *Moby-Dick* in Calgary, takes up the baton for the four performances

San Diego, CA - Maestro Karen Keltner, San Diego Opera's Resident Conductor, has withdrawn from the production of *Moby-Dick*, opening this Saturday, February 18 at the Civic Theatre, due to illness.

Announcing this today, Ian D. Campbell, General Director and Artistic Director of the Company said: "Karen had advised me a few days ago that she was not entirely well but would soldier on nevertheless. But she did suggest I check if a replacement were available in case her illness became worse. She has now told me that in the interests of this important production, it would be best to replace her as she was unsure that her health would allow her to fulfill the engagement at the standard she expects of herself, and the audience and opera deserve."

Campbell went on to say: "Because of Karen's warning I had contacted Maestro Joseph Mechavich who has just finished conducting *Moby-Dick* in Calgary with Ben Heppner, who sings Captain Ahab here. Fortunately, Joseph was available and commences rehearsals with the full cast at a piano dress rehearsal tonight, Monday. He will be fully prepared for the performances."

"We are indeed fortunate that Maestro Mechavich has made himself available, and that *Moby-Dick* is already in his repertoire. His last Calgary performance of *Moby-Dick* was on February 3," Campbell said.

Joseph Mechavich is Music Director and Principal Conductor of Kentucky Opera and has worked with many opera companies including the Deutscheoper Berlin, New York City Opera, Washington National Opera, Calgary Opera and Dayton Opera,

A popular Symphonic conductor, he has appeared with the Naples Philharmonic, Orlando Philharmonic, Hartford Symphony, Waterbury Symphony, Virginia Symphony and the Sarasota Orchestra.

Future opera performances include *Susannah* with Florentine Opera and *Romeo and Juliet* for Florida Grand Opera.

“I am very sorry to lose Karen for this production”, Campbell said. “She is a vital part of San Diego Opera, and we all wish her a speedy recovery. I particularly want to thank her for her extraordinary professionalism in putting the performances, the artists, the audience and the composer’s wonderful opera above her own desire to conduct. Not many would do this,” Campbell said.

The 2012 International Season

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| <i>Salome</i> | Richard Strauss | January 28, 31 February 3 and 5 (mat), 2012 |
| <i>Moby-Dick</i> | Jake Heggie | February 18, 21, 24 and 26 (mat), 2012 |
| <i>Don Pasquale</i> | Gaetano Donizetti | March 10, 13, 16 and 18 (mat), 2012 |
| Renée Fleming in Concert | | March 24, 2012 |
| <i>The Barber of Seville</i> | Gioachino Rossini | April 21, 24, 27 and 29 (mat), 2012 |

Purchasing Tickets

Single tickets for all operas are on sale. Single ticket prices are \$50, \$100, \$120, \$130, \$160, \$200 and \$210 (with some seats on select nights slightly higher) and can be purchased by calling (619) 533-7000 or online at www.sdopera.com.

Tickets to Renée Fleming in concert start at \$100 and can be purchased by calling (619) 533-7000 or online at www.sdopera.com.

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 28 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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