

For immediate release

NASHVILLE OPERA

September 23, 2009 (NASHVILLE, TN) — Renowned Swedish-American soprano Erika Sunnegårdh will make her Tennessee debut in the role of Floria Tosca when Nashville Opera presents the first production of the 2009-10 season, Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*. The opera will be sung in Italian with projected English translations. Directed by John Hoomes, the opera will feature the Grammy Award winning Nashville Symphony under the direction of Maestro Steven White with Chorus Master Amy Tate Williams leading the Nashville Opera Ensemble. Performances are scheduled at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center's Andrew Jackson Hall on Thursday, October 8 at 7:00 PM and Saturday, October 10 at 8:00 PM. Tickets range in price from \$17 to \$80 and are available from Nashville Opera at (615) 832-5242, online at www.nashvilleopera.org, or through the Tennessee Performing Arts Center Box Office at (615) 782-4040. A limited number of pay-what-you-can seats can be purchased at the Noah Liff Opera Center at 3622 Redmon Street in Sylvan Heights during normal business hours.

"Nashville Opera's production of Puccini's *TOSCA* captures all of the best elements of large-scale Italian Grand Opera: magnificent sets and costumes, glorious vocal and orchestral music, a gripping story-line, and a fantastic, international cast of singers," says John Hoomes, Artistic Director. "This production offers the most passionate and emotional experience one can hope to experience in a theatrical production.."

Soprano Erika Sunnegårdh made her astonishing operatic debut in September of 2004, in the title role of *Turandot* at the Malmö Opera och Musikteater in southern Sweden. Only 18 months later she made her much publicized Metropolitan Opera debut in the role of Leonore in Beethoven's *Fidelio*, as well as her Carnegie Hall debut singing with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and James Conlon. This was followed by a tour of Japan with the company's production of *Die Walküre* conducted by Christoph Eschenbach and Andrew Davis. Since then, Ms. Sunnegårdh has performed in the new production of *Turandot* at Norrlandsoperan using the Luciano Berio ending and filmed for a Swedish Television Broadcast. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra with Mario Venzago followed, and in September she went to Spain to sing her first Elsa, in concert performances of *Lohengrin* conducted by Semyon Bychkov. She took on her first staged *Salome* under the direction of John Hoomes at the Florentine Opera to unanimous rave reviews. Prior to embarking on an operatic career, Ms. Sunnegårdh spent a considerable amount of time on both the contemporary and recital repertoire. During her education she attended the Israel Vocal Arts Institute, Tanglewood Music Center, the Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies, The International Institute of Vocal Arts, as well as the undergraduate program at the Manhattan School of Music; all on scholarship. In 1999 Erika completed her Master of Arts degree at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College after two profoundly inspiring and healing years there – an experience to which she credits much of her present success. Ms. Sunnegårdh is a recipient of the annual Cultural Award of the American Scandinavian Society, for the promotion of Scandinavian Culture in the United States. In 1999 she founded *In time with Music*, a community outreach program for the benefit of hundreds of public school children in Queens, New York.

Tenor William Joyner performs the role of Mario Cavaradossi. Mr. Joyner has given nearly 500 performances of 50 different roles, in 10 countries on 3 continents. He has sung in some of the world's foremost opera theaters, including Milan's Teatro alla Scala, Bologna's Teatro Comunale, Venice's Gran Teatro la Fenice, Paris' Opéra National (Bastille), Brussels' Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Berlin's Deutsche Oper and Deutsche Staatsoper, The Washington National Opera, Miami's Florida Grand Opera, The New York City Opera, and The Santa Fe Opera. William Joyner has performed with the Chicago Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, and the Münchener Rundfunkorchester, and has worked with some of the greatest maestri of our time, including Daniel Barenboim, the late Gary Bertini, Bertrand de Billy, John DeMain, Heinz Fricke, the late Armin

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Jordan, Vladimir Jurowski, Anne Manson, Antonio Pappano, Georges Prêtre, and the late Marcello Viotti.

Baritone Luis Ledesma returns to Nashville Opera as Baron Scarpia. Mr. Ledesma has established himself as a singer with powerful, yet refined vocal and theatrical gifts. His career already includes appearances in several international opera houses around the world, including Teatro alla Scala (Luisa Fernanda), the Liceu in Barcelona (Alphonse in *La favorite*, Riccardo in *I puritani* and Marcello in *La bohème*), Klangbogen Festival in Vienna (Leoncavallo's *La bohème*), Teatro Municipal de Santiago (Escamillo in *Carmen*), Semperoper in Dresden (Marcello in *La bohème*), Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires (Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Bellas Artes in Mexico City (Marcello in *La bohème*), Macau Festival (Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*), and Graz Oper (Escamillo in *Carmen*). In the United States, Mr. Ledesma has sung with many companies, including Houston Grand Opera, Washington Opera, Madison Opera, Nashville Opera, Portland Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Connecticut Opera, Opera Pacific, Palm Beach Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Opera Carolina, Memphis Opera, Minnesota Opera and New York City Opera.

About Nashville Opera

Nashville Opera, Tennessee's largest professional opera company, is dedicated to creating legendary productions and programs. Among the most successful regional companies in the United States of America, Nashville Opera has presented three different world premiere operas since its inception in 1981. Main stage performances are presented at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center, and play to over 17,000 people annually. Nashville Opera's extensive education and outreach touring program reaches an additional 25,000 students in 18 counties throughout Middle Tennessee.