

Cincinnati Opera Announces Withdrawal of Maestro James Levine from 2010 Summer Festival

John Keenan Will Conduct *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*

CINCINNATI – Evans Mirageas, The Harry T. Wilks Artistic Director of Cincinnati Opera, announced today that James Levine is obliged to withdraw from the company's 90th Anniversary Gala Concert (June 19) and the season-opening production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (June 23 & 26). Conductor John Keenan, from the Metropolitan Opera, will take over for *Die Meistersinger*. The company's previously announced roster of guest conductors, including Edoardo Müller, Steven Reineke, and Henri Venanzi, will lead the Gala Concert.

Said Maestro Levine, "No one is more frustrated and saddened than I am to have to relinquish this long planned and much anticipated return to Cincinnati. However, my doctors advise that in order to make a full recovery from my impending back surgery I must be prudent about post-operative rehabilitation so that I may return to work in the best shape possible. I will miss this homecoming, but I know John Keenan, the great cast and choruses, and Cincinnati Symphony will deliver a superb set of performances."

"John Keenan comes to this engagement having already assisted Maestro Levine on numerous occasions at the Metropolitan Opera and having conducted many of our cast members in *Die Meistersinger* during the most recent performances at The Met," said Mirageas. "Mr. Keenan's other Wagner credentials are considerable. He was for several summers on the music staff at the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth. He has conducted *Das Rheingold*, also at The Met, and *The Flying Dutchman* at the Kirov Opera in St. Petersburg. During his long association with the Metropolitan Opera, he has worked on every Wagner opera in the company's repertoire. John was already engaged to conduct *La Bohème* at the end of our season, and we are pleased to invite him to step in for *Die Meistersinger* with the endorsement of Maestro Levine."

Mirageas continued, "In our 90th anniversary year, this reminds me of the historical connection between The Met and Cincinnati Opera. Our only music director in Cincinnati was Fausto Cleva, who served us from 1934 to 1962. He too was a regular member of the Metropolitan Opera conducting roster. So, in our anniversary season history repeats itself! All of us at Cincinnati Opera wish James Levine a speedy and complete recovery."

Cincinnati Opera celebrates 90 years of grand opera in Cincinnati during its 2010 Summer Festival (June 19-July 25), featuring an all-star 90th Anniversary Gala Concert, Richard Wagner's Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Giuseppe Verdi's Otello, and Giacomo Puccini's La Bohème.

Season Presenting Sponsor is **PNC Bank**. Season Presenting Co-Sponsors are **Harry & Linda Fath** and **Cathy & Tom Crain**. The 2010 Summer Festival is also made possible with support from **The Louise Dieterle Nippert Musical Arts Fund**, the **Fine Arts Fund**, **Ohio Arts Council**, **National Endowment for the Arts**, and many generous individuals, corporations, and foundations.

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