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New Production of Puccini's **Tosca** Opens  
the 2009-10 Season of ***Great Performances at the Met***

Karita Mattila makes her Met role debut in the title role  
and Luc Bondy directs his first Met staging

(New York, NY – December 1, 2009) – A new production of Puccini's **Tosca** starring **Karita Mattila** opens THIRTEEN's ***Great Performances at the Met's*** fourth season on PBS. Mattila sings the title role of *Tosca* for the first time outside her native Finland, opposite **Marcelo Álvarez** as Cavaradossi. **George Gagnidze** is Scarpia and **Paul Plishka** is the Sacristan. **Joseph Colaneri** conducts, and acclaimed director **Luc Bondy** makes his Met debut with the production, which attracted extraordinary attention when it opened the Met's current season. Bondy, among the world's most renowned directors of opera and theater, has kept his **Tosca** in the Napoleonic era. "Directing singers in a realistic and precise way is more important than translating this kind of story to today," he says. "What I'd like to bring out in my production is that difference between

blind passion and cold strategy.” Mattila, who has collaborated with Bondy in the past, says, “Tosca uses her beauty as an asset in a man’s world. But no matter how strong she is, her power has limits *because* she’s a woman. This fragile side is what makes it interesting – and this is where the real work with the director begins.”

The production is rated TV-PG and will air during primetime on THIRTEEN’S ***Great Performances at the Met*** in HD on Wednesday, December 16 at 9 p.m. EST on PBS (check local listings).

***Great Performances at the Met*** is a presentation of THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG – one of America’s most prolific and respected public media providers.

***Great Performances at the Met: Tosca*** is the first of 10 productions airing this season during the 2009-2010 series. The performance is sung in Italian with English surtitles. Sets are designed by **Richard Peduzzi**, also in his company debut, costumes designed by **Milena Canonero**, and lighting designed by **Max Keller**.

***Great Performances*** is funded by the Irene Diamond Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, Vivian Milstein, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, public television viewers and PBS. Corporate support for ***Great Performances at the Met*** is provided by Toll Brothers, America’s luxury home-builder®.

Visit **Great Performances Online** at [www.pbs.org/gperf](http://www.pbs.org/gperf) for additional information on this and other **Great Performances** programs. For the Met, Mia Bongiovanni and Elena Park are Supervising Producers, and Louisa Briccetti and Victoria Warivonchik are Producers. Peter Gelb is Executive Producer. For **Great Performances**, Bill O'Donnell is Series Producer; David Horn is Executive Producer.

#### **About WNET.ORG**

New York public media company WNET.ORG is a pioneering provider of television and web content. The parent of Thirteen, WLIW21 and Creative News Group, WNET.ORG brings such acclaimed broadcast series and websites as Great Performances, Worldfocus, Nature, American Masters, Charlie Rose, Wide Angle, Secrets of the Dead, Religion & Ethics Newsweekly, Visions, Consuelo Mack WealthTrack, Wild Chronicles, Miffy and Friends, and Cyberchase to national and international audiences. Through its wide range of channels and platforms, WNET.ORG serves the entire New York City metro area with unique local productions, broadcasts, and innovative educational and cultural projects. In all that it does, WNET.ORG pursues a single, overarching goal – to create media experiences of lasting significance for New York, America, and the world. For more information, visit [www.wnet.org](http://www.wnet.org).

#### **About the Met**

Under the leadership of General Manager Peter Gelb and Music Director James Levine, the Met has a series of bold initiatives underway that are designed to broaden its audience and revitalize the company's repertory. The Met has made a commitment to presenting modern masterpieces alongside the classic repertory, with highly theatrical productions featuring the greatest opera stars in the world.

The Met's 2009-10 season features eight new productions, four of which are Met premieres: Janáček's *From the House of the Dead*, Verdi's *Attila*, Shostakovich's *The Nose*, and Rossini's *Armida*. The other new productions are Puccini's *Tosca*, Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Bizet's *Carmen*, and Thomas's *Hamlet*.

Building on its 78-year-old international radio broadcast history – heard over the Toll Brothers-Metropolitan Opera International Radio Network – the Met uses advanced media distribution platforms and state-of-the-art technology to reach audiences around the world.

The Emmy and Peabody Award-winning *The Met: Live in HD* series returns for its fourth season in 2009-10 with nine transmissions, beginning October 10 with *Tosca* starring Karita Mattila and ending with *Armida* starring Renée Fleming on May 1. The Met recently introduced *Met Player*, a new subscription service that makes much of its extensive video and audio catalog of full-length performances available to the public for the first time online, and in exceptional, state-of-the-art quality. Metropolitan Opera Radio on SIRIUS XM Radio broadcasts both live and rare historical performances; the *Met on Rhapsody* on-demand service offers audio recordings; and the Met presents free live audio streaming of performances on its website once every week during the opera season with support from RealNetworks®.

The Met has launched several audience development initiatives, including Open House dress rehearsals, a popular rush ticket program, reduced ticket prices, Gallery Met, and an annual Holiday Series presentation for families. For more information, please visit: [www.metopera.org](http://www.metopera.org).

Broadcast premieres on ***Great Performances at the Met*** are scheduled as follows  
(Please check local PBS listings):

**Wednesday, December 16, 9pm**

**TOSCA** – **Karita Mattila**, **Marcelo Álvarez**, and **George Gagnidze** star in a new production of Puccini's *Tosca* directed by **Luc Bondy**. **Joseph Colaneri** conducts.

**Wednesday, January 20, 9pm**

**THE AUDITION** – Directed by award-winning filmmaker **Susan Froemke**, this acclaimed documentary looks at the intense pressures young opera singers face as they struggle to succeed in one of the most difficult professions in the performing arts.

**Sunday, January 31, 12pm**

**AIDA** – **Violeta Urmana**, **Dolora Zajick** and **Johan Botha** portray the love triangle at the center of **Sonja Frisell**'s production of Verdi's *Aida*. **Daniele Gatti** conducts.

**Sunday, February 28 at 12pm**

**TURANDOT** – **Maria Guleghina** sings the title role of Puccini's *Turandot* in **Franco Zeffirelli**'s stunning production. **Marina Poplavskaya**, **Marcello Giordani**, and **Samuel Ramey** also star. **Andris Nelsons** conducts.

**Wednesday, March 24, 9pm**

**LES CONTES D'HOFMANN** – Tony Award-winning director **Bartlett Sher** directs **Anna Netrebko**, **Joseph Calleja**, and **Alan Held** in a new production of the Offenbach favorite. **Kathleen Kim**, **Ekaterina Gubanova**, and **Kate Lindsey** round out the cast. **James Levine** conducts.

**Sunday, April 25, 12pm**

**DER ROSENKAVALIER** – **Renée Fleming** and **Susan Graham** star Richard Strauss's popular favorite, also featuring **Eric Cutler**, **Kristinn Sigmundsson**, and **Christine Schäfer**. **Edo de Waart** conducts.

**Sunday, May 16, 12pm**

**CARMEN** – **Elīna Garanča** sings the title role opposite **Roberto Alagna** in director **Richard Eyre**'s new production of Bizet's masterpiece. **Barbara Frittoli** is Micaela and **Mariusz Kwiecien** plays the matador Escamillo. **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** conducts.

**Sunday, June 20, 12pm**

**SIMON BOCCANEGRA** – **Plácido Domingo** sings the baritone title role of Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* for the first time in his Met career, in **Giancarlo del Monaco**'s production. **Adrianne Pieczonka**, **Marcello Giordani**, and **James Morris** star. **James Levine** conducts.

**Sunday, July 18, 12pm**

**HAMLET** – **Simon Keenlyside** and **Natalie Dessay** headline the Ambroise Thomas opera based on Shakespeare's play, in a new production directed by **Patrice Caurier** and **Moshe Leiser**. With **Jennifer Larmore**, **Toby Spence**, and **James Morris**. **Louis Langrée** conducts.

**Sunday, August 22, 12pm**

**ARMIDA** – **Renée Fleming** plays Rossini's vengeful sorceress in this opera's Met premiere, directed by **Mary Zimmerman**. The cast of multiple tenors includes **Lawrence Brownlee**, **Bruce Ford**, **José Manuel Zapata**, **Barry Banks**, and **Kobie van Rensburg**. **Riccardo Frizza** conducts.