

NEWS RELEASE

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***Il Postino* brings Spanish opera to Philadelphia**

City's first professionally-staged Spanish-language opera by a Hispanic composer

Philadelphia, Pa. - (March 12, 2012) - Center City Opera Theater in its commitment to newer works will perform the east coast premiere of Daniel Catán's *Il Postino*, May 17, 19, and 20 at the Prince Music Theater in downtown Philadelphia.

General & Artistic Director of Center City Opera Theater Andrew Kurtz is excited to bring Spanish-language opera to the vibrant arts scene of Philadelphia, offering an art form that has traditionally ignored the rich culture of the Hispanic community.

"So few Hispanic residents of Greater Philadelphia attend opera because they are not aware of how accessible it is or how relevant it can be to their communities," said Kurtz. "Our goal is to expand opera audiences in all ethnic communities." *Il Postino* is the first Spanish-language opera by a Hispanic composer to be performed in Philadelphia by a professional opera company.

Il Postino, based on the Academy-award-winning Italian film of the same name, tells a fictitious story based on Chilean poet Pablo Neruda and his exile from his homeland. The opera is about Neruda's mentoring relationship with a young aspiring poet (and postman) on a small island community.

Il Postino received strong praise from its premiere with the LA Opera in September 2010. Catán's lush, tonal score was described by the LA times as containing "Puccini-infused lyricism", bringing a certain freshness to the classical style in a way that invites opera newcomers. The role of Pablo Neruda was played by tenor Plácido Domingo, who had a strong artistic relationship with Catán before the composer's sudden, unexpected passing this past April.

Catán saw Pablo Neruda's friendship with Mario, the postman, as means for momentum in the story. Catán said, "[Mario] not only realizes his dreams of love, but also his dreams of self-realization. In fact, I came to see Mario as a reflection of Neruda."*

Composer Daniel Catán, who planned to take residency in Philadelphia for the east coast premiere, shocked the opera world when he was found unconscious in his bed during the University of Texas' production of *Il Postino* in April. Mexican-born Catán is among the most significant and admired contemporary composers and is regarded as the most important composer of Spanish opera in the United States; Daniel was primarily responsible for the adoption of the Spanish language in contemporary opera works. *Il Postino* is his fourth completed opera; his opera *Florencia en el Amazonas* was the first Spanish language opera ever commissioned by a major United States opera company. The Philadelphia performances of *Il Postino* will be dedicated to Catán's memory.

"To have lost a composer of his stature at the very height of his powers is a devastating loss to the world of classical music," said Plácido Domingo in a statement following Catán's death. Domingo was close friends with Catán and regards the world premiere of *Il Postino* as one of the most important moments of LA Opera's history.

CCOT has commissioned a new chamber orchestra reduction, authorized by the composer, as part of its mission to make new work more accessible to all communities. This smaller orchestra will provide regional companies with more limited performance space or budgets to produce *Il Postino*. This reduction is made possible in part by a generous grant by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tickets for *Il Postino* and all other CCOT productions can be purchased online at [OperaTheater.org](http://www.operatheater.org). For more about *Il Postino*, follow this link: http://www.centercityoperatheater.org/wp2/?page_id=1972

*Quote taken from "Luminous Mind, Bright Devil" by Leann Davis Alspaugh

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Center City Opera Theater's mission is to present opera productions of the highest professional quality with a focus on new work and education, recruiting new audiences through intimacy and affordability of performances and providing opportunities for emerging opera professionals. Now in its 13th season, CCOT remains the only professional opera company in the United States whose primary mission is the development and production of new opera works.

PRESS RELEASE SUMMARY

WHAT: *IL POSTINO* East Coast Premiere

WHO: Center City Opera Theater

WHEN: May 17, 19 & 20, 2012

WHERE: Prince Music Theater, Philadelphia

COST: \$39-79

Tickets available online by visiting www.OperaTheater.org

For additional information and materials regarding this press release, as well as requests for interviews, quotes, or full season press kit, contact Marketing Associate Eric Brower: **610.547.3476** or **eric@operatheater.org**