

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

CONTACT:

Lisle Peterson (510) 643-6714
lisle@calperfs.berkeley.edu
Christina Kellogg (510) 642-9121
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu

**RISING STAR TENOR SALVATORE LICITRA
RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES
SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2004 AT 7:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL**

BERKELEY, February 12, 2004 – “With a deep baritonal lower register, a brighter upper register, and strong secure high notes,” observed *The New York Times* in 2001, tenor **Salvatore Licitra** “is one to watch.” The powerful young tenor from Sicily, who since that time has appeared in many of Italy and Europe’s esteemed venues as well as Carnegie Hall and Cal Performances’ Zellerbach Hall, returns to Berkeley **Sunday, March 21, 2004 at 7:00 p.m.** Licitra performs a program of works by **Verdi, Bernstein, Puccini, Mascagni, Wood, Rachmaninoff, and Ponchielli**, accompanied by members of the **Berkeley Symphony Orchestra**, guest conducted by **Eugene Kohn**.

SALVATORE LICITRA

Originally scheduled to make his Met debut in the 2004/05 season, 35-year-old **Salvatore Licitra** made his American opera debut on May 11, 2002 at a Met performance that was planned to celebrate Luciano Pavarotti’s farewell with a closing-night-of-the-season gala performance of *Tosca*. When the management was informed that the legendary tenor might not be able to sing due to illness, the Met contacted Salvatore Licitra in Italy two days before the gala and asked him if he would be willing to stand by for his indisposed colleague. “The audience turned the evening from an anxious farewell to a beloved artist...into a star-is-born triumph!” wrote *The New York Times* of the tenor’s performance, adding that “[Licitra] a genuine find, an exciting tenor with a big, dark-hued and muscular voice.” Ten months later, in February 2003, Licitra made his American concert debut at Cal Performances, with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. “When it comes to beautiful tone and sheer vocal heft,” wrote the *Contra Costa Times*, “Licitra is a singer of rare and prodigious gifts.”

-MORE-

Salvatore Licitra “discovered” his voice when his mother heard him imitate a professional tenor on the radio. Surprised at the quality of his singing, she urged him to seek a teacher. Though his initial instruction was incomplete, he eventually came to the attention of the famous Italian tenor Carlo Bergonzi, who nurtured the young man’s natural voice and gave him a solid technique. After a number of years, Licitra not only began entering competitions (which he didn’t win), but also started auditioning. His break-through engagement came at the grand Arena of Verona, when he was asked to take over for another tenor in a new production of *Un Ballo in Maschera*. His success led to an audition at La Scala for the fiendishly difficult role of Don Alvaro in *Forza del Destino* that landed him a contract in the alternate cast for a new production under the baton of the company’s music director, Riccardo Muti. His success in *Forza* led to multiple follow-up engagements there, including new productions of *Il Trovatore* and *Macbeth*, and the revival of *Tosca*.

Highlights of the 2003/04 season include *Macbeth* with La Scala on tour in Japan; *Ballo in Maschera* with the Zurich Opera and with the Collegiate Chorale in Carnegie Hall; *Il Trovatore* with Opera Bastille in Paris and San Carlo in Naples; *Tosca* in Zurich, the Vienna Staatsoper and Berlin’s Deutsche Oper; a concert performance of *Norma* in Miami; and concert appearances in New York’s Avery Fisher Hall, and Berkeley, Berlin, Budapest, Seoul, Munich, and Montreal.

An exclusive Sony artist, Licitra’s first recording was the soundtrack for the film *The Man Who Cried*, where the tenor supplied the singing voice for actor John Turturro. His first complete opera recording is the La Scala *Il Trovatore* with Muti conducting, with fellow cast members Barbara Frittoli, Leo Nucci, and Violette Urmana. His first solo disc, *The Debut*, features arias of Verdi and Puccini, and his second recording, last year’s *Duetto*, with tenor colleague Marcelo Álvarez, furnished the material for massive public performances the pair sang in Rome and New York. The concert at the steps of the Coliseum in Rome was later broadcast on PBS.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Salvatore Licitra** in concert on **Sunday, March 21, 2004** at **7:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$38.00, \$58.00, \$86.00, and \$100.00**. Performance tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to

charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

###

San Francisco Chronicle, *San Francisco* magazine, and KDFC Classical 102.1 FM are season media sponsors of Cal Performances' 2003/04 performing arts season.

All Cal Performances programs are supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Cal Performances' presentation of Salvatore Licitra is sponsored by Bank of America.

###

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, March 21, 2004 at 7:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph, Berkeley

Special Event

Salvatore Licitra, tenor
Members of the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra
Eugene Kohn, conductor

Program:

Verdi/Prelude and "Celeste Aïda" from *Aïda*
Prelude and "Questa o quella" from *Rigoletto*
"Ah, la paterna mano" from *Macbeth*
Overture from *I Vespri Siciliani*
"Ma se m'è forza perderti" from *Un Ballo in Maschera*
Wood/"Fantasma d'amore" from the *Duetto* album
Rachmaninoff, Wood/"Il Volo" from the *Duetto* album
Bernstein/Overture from *Candide* and "Maria" from *West Side Story*
Puccini/"Tra voi belle" from *Manon Lescaut*
Mascagni/Overture from *Le Maschere*
Ponchielli/"Cielo, e mar" from *La Gioconda*

Tickets: \$38.00, \$58.00, \$86.00, and \$100.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.