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**EMERGING STAR ROLANDO VILLAZÓN MAKES HIS
CAL PERFORMANCES DEBUT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 AT 3:00 P.M.**

BERKELEY, August 15, 2006 – With “ardent, virile presence” (*The Associated Press*), Mexican tenor **Rolando Villazón** makes his Cal Performances debut **Sunday, September 24, 2006** in Hertz Hall. Often compared to a young Plácido Domingo, the 34-year-old Mexico native has captured international attention in recent years. Villazón, a 2006 Grammy nominee, “is the real thing, a tenor with star potential and striking individuality” (*The Sunday Times*, London). The first half of the evening’s program will feature Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*, and the second will be comprised of Bononcini’s “Per la Gloria d’adorarvi” from *Griselda*; Handel’s “Ombra mai fu” from *Serse*; Massenet’s “Ouvre tes yeux bleus” from *Manon*; Fauré’s “Après un reve”; Tosti’s “Chacon de l’adieu”; and Obradors’ “Ai Amor,” “Corazon porque pasais,” “Del cabello mas sutil,” and “Coplas de curro dulce verses.” He will be accompanied by **Bryndon Hassman**; “a canny accompanist, and a fine pianist” (*The New York Sun*).

ROLANDO VILLAZÓN

Rolando Villazón is considered as one of the leading lyric tenors of today’s young singers. Born in Mexico City in 1972, Villazón joined the Espacios Academy for the Performing Arts at age 11, where he studied music, acting, contemporary dance and ballet. His focus turned to opera in 1990 when he met baritone Arturo Nieto, who became his voice teacher; he later entered the National Conservatory of Music to continue his training. After he won two national contests in Mexico, Villazón continued his studies under the tutelage of baritone Gabriel Mijares.

Villazón began his international career in 1998, when he became a member of the Pittsburgh Opera’s Young Artists Program. Following this, Villazón entered the Merola Opera Program of the San Francisco Opera where he participate in master classes with Joan Sutherland and performed the role of Alfredo in *La Traviata*. Villazón was brought to international attention in 2000, when he was invited to replace an ailing colleague in the same work at the Opera Bastille in Paris.

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Villazón has appeared with many of the world's leading opera houses including the Berlin State Opera, the Opera National de Paris, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and the Metropolitan Opera. Among the roles he has performed are Faust in *Faust*, Don José in *Carmen*, Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore*, Tebaldo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, Don Carlo in *Don Carlo* and Werther in *Werther*. Villazón is most well known for his performances as Alfredo in *La Traviata* and the Duke in *Rigoletto*.

Villazón has won numerous major awards internationally. In 2003, he was given the French honor Les Victoires de la Musique in the category "Foreign Discovery of the Year." He was awarded the ECHO Classics 2004 prize for his first solo recording featuring Italian arias, and the ECHO Classics 2005 prize in the category "Singer of the Year 2005." Also in 2005 he won "Best Recital Recording 2005" and the annual *Opernwelt* magazine's "Singer of the Year" award. He has been nominated for the *Gramophone* "Artist of the Year" and "Record of the Year" awards in 2005 and his second solo recording, featuring French arias, earned him a Grammy Award nomination for "Best Classical Vocal Performance."

Villazón's latest recording with Virgin Classics has just been released to great acclaim and his voice can be heard in the Academy Award-nominated film *Joyeux Noel*. In addition to his solo recordings, Villazón can be heard in Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* under Daniel Barenboim for Teldec and in *Tristan und Isolde* with Plácido Domingo under the baton of Antonio Pappano for EMI. He has recently signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon, which has already released the recent Salzburg production of *La Traviata* on both CD and DVD.

Villazón's upcoming engagements include *La Bohème* at the Metropolitan Opera, *La Traviata* and *Manon* at the Los Angeles Opera, *Les Contes d'Hoffman* at Opera Bastille in Paris and *Werther* at the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome. Upcoming performances also include various concerts and recitals in London, Atlanta, Berlin and Paris.

BRYNDON HASSMAN

Bay Area native **Bryndon Hassman** is in his 17th year as a member of the music staff of the San Francisco Opera, where he has worked on such diverse productions as Richard Strauss' *Capriccio* designed by Gianni Versace; Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*; the world premieres of Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* and Susa's *Dangerous Liaisons*; the American premieres of Messiaen's *St. François d'Assise* and Henze's *Das verratene Meer*; and the West Coast premieres of *Harvey Milk* and Adams' *The Death of Klinghoffer*. For the San Francisco Opera Center, Hassman received critical acclaim for his performances in the North American premiere of Sir Michael Tippett's *King Priam*. Additional Opera Center credits include productions of *Ezio*, *The Aspern Papers* and *Albert Herring*. A 1989 and 1990 participant in the Merola Opera Program, Hassman has appeared in recitals accompanying Renée Fleming, Ruth Ann Swenson, Jerry Hadley, Thomas Hampson, as well as Brian Asawa, Hector Vasquez, Chester Patton, John Relyea, Mel Ulrich and Hugh Russell for the Schwabacher Debut Recital Series.

His more unusual assignments include coaching Robin Williams on the aria *Largo al factotum* for the 1993 film "Mrs. Doubtfire" and assisting Victor Borge for a concert performance of *Carmen* with the San Francisco Symphony. In October 2004 he received unanimous praise from the international press for accompanying Rolando Villazón's New York recital debut at the Metropolitan Museum as well as the follow-up recital in February of 2006.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for Rolando Villazón on Sunday, September 24 at 3:00 p.m. in Hertz Hall are priced at \$68.00. 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.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, September 24 at 3:00 p.m.

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at College Ave., Berkeley

Recital

Rolando Villazón, tenor
Bryndon Hassman, piano

Program:

Schumann/*Dichterliebe*

Bononcini/"Per la Gloria d'adorarvi" from *Griselda*

Handel/"Ombra mai fu" from *Serse*

Massenet/"Ouvre tes yeux bleus" from *Manon*

Fauré/"Après un reve"

Tosti/"Chanson de l'adieu"

Obradors/"Ai Amor"; "Corazon porque pasais"; "Del cabello mas sutil"; "Coplas de curro dulce verses"

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