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**NICOLA LUISOTTI AWARDED 40TH “PREMIO PUCCINI” AWARD
FOLLOWING HISTORIC 100TH ANNIVERSARY PERFORMANCE OF
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA**

December 13, 2010 -- Maestro Nicola Luisotti was awarded the 40th “Premio Puccini” Award in conjunction with the historic 100th Anniversary of Puccini’s *La fanciulla del West* at The Metropolitan Opera on December 10, 2010. At a special reception following the performance, Metropolitan Opera General Manager Peter Gelb saluted the historic occasion and recognized Maestro Luisotti and the cast. Mr. Paolo Spadaccini, President of the Fondazione Festival Pucciniano, presented the statuette to Maestro Luisotti, stating that “Nicola Luisotti, who began his career just meters away from Puccini’s home theater, is an ambassador to the world for the music of Puccini.”



“It is such an honor to receive this special award on the historic occasion of the 100th anniversary of Puccini’s masterpiece, *La fanciulla del West*,” stated Nicola Luisotti, “and I truly thank Fondazione Festival Pucciniano for recognizing my work in such a meaningful way.” “Tonight I am very proud to be Italian, and to share with the people of America the music of this incredible composer from the place where I was born. Puccini is here tonight with us, for all of the incredible artists here at The Met have the blood of Puccini in their veins. For sure I am not an expert but someone who will always be learning new ways into Puccini’s music. I expect to serve the music of Maestro Puccini for the rest of my life.”

Born in the Tuscan city of Viareggio, Nicola Luisotti has a special relationship with The Fondazione Festival Pucciniano. Luisotti can trace his earliest professional performances back to the Puccini Festival at Torre del Lago where he sang in the chorus in 1984. Now internationally acclaimed, Maestro Luisotti serves as the Music Director of San Francisco Opera and as Principal Conductor of the Tokyo Philharmonic.

Nicola Luisotti will lead a total of eight performances of *La fanciulla del West* at The Metropolitan Opera, including the HD broadcast of the final performance on January 8, 2011. Writing in the *New York Times*, Tony Tommasini called Luisotti’s opening night performance a “distinguished performance” and praised his “stylish, nuanced and sensitive conducting.”

Luisotti makes his professional debut at Milan’s La Scala in a new production of *Attila* in June of 2011 and will also lead *Tosca* and *Die Zauberflöte* with Dresden Opera. Equally at home on the concert stage, his schedule includes upcoming engagements with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Frankfurt’s Hessischer Rundfunk Orchestra and Alte Oper Orchestra, the orchestra of Rome’s Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and Milan’s Filarmonica della Scala.

The “Premio Puccini” Award, created in 1971, is a representation of the Paolo Troubetzkoy statue of Puccini placed in front of the composer’s former home in Torre del Lago in 1949. Maestro Luisotti joins a long line of distinguished artists who have received the award, including internationally acclaimed film director Woody Allen, conductors Lorin Maazel, Bruno Bartoletti and Riccardo Muti, and renowned opera singers Luciano Pavarotti, José Carreras, Renata Scotto, Mirella Freni, Renata Tebaldi, and many more.

Complete information on the award can be found at: www.puccinifestival.it
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