

### Opera's Increasing Appeal

(NAPSA)—With frequent use in TV commercials and movies and the mainstream success of The Three Tenors, opera is experiencing unprecedented popularity in the U.S.

Even as entertainment options arise, the centuries-old art form has grown. According to the National Endowment for the Arts, U.S. opera companies posted more than \$284 million in box office receipts in 2000 (up 7.9 percent from the prior year) and almost one-third of the total American opera audience is under 35.

Countless Americans have been introduced to opera via Chevron-Texaco's radio broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Each Saturday matinee airs on 360 U.S. radio stations and in more than 40 countries. Since Dec. 7, 1940, more than 1,252 broadcasts of some 148 different operas have aired; the partnership is the longest running national sponsorship in broadcasting history.

"Opera's popularity stems from its combination of passion, staging, costumes, and the greatest voices in the world," said Beverly Sills, chairman of the Met. "ChevronTexaco's broadcasts have helped bring opera into the living rooms of millions of homes."

To acquaint new fans and for enthusiasts, The Metropolitan Opera Guild has launched [www.operainfo.org](http://www.operainfo.org), which provides useful information including educational material for both novices and aficionados, the classroom and music teachers.

#### Facts about opera:

- The most frequently produced operas in the U.S. are *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Rigoletto*, *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, and *The Magic Flute* (Source: OPERA America).

- The best-known operatic composers include Verdi, Puccini,



**Placido Domingo is one of the most popular performers to sing at the Metropolitan Opera.**

Mozart and Wagner.

- Operas have provided the basis for Broadway hits, including *La Bohème*, the current box office smash, as well as Elton John's adaptation of *Aida*.

- Opera originated in 16th-century Italy. The Metropolitan Opera opened in 1883 and moved to its current home at Lincoln Center in 1966.

- Famous stars of the Met include Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo, Marian Anderson, Maria Callas, Robert Merrill, Ezio Pinza, Leontyne Price, Beverly Sills, and Enrico Caruso.

#### Glossary of terms:

- *Opera*: A play where all the lines are sung instead of spoken.

- *Aria*: A dramatic solo vocal piece.

- *Libretto*: Italian for "little book," the libretto is the text of what is sung in the opera.

- *Overture*: Instrumental music played before the start of an opera.

- *Soprano*: The highest female vocal range.

- *Tenor*: The high male voice; the vocal range of famous singers such as Caruso and Pavarotti.