

PLACIDO DOMINGO

BIOGRAPHY

Plácido Domingo is a world-renowned, multifaceted artist: now in his late sixties, he is recognized as one of the finest and most influential singing actors in the history of opera, yet he is also a respected conductor and a major force as an opera administrator, in his role as General Director of Washington National Opera and Los Angeles Opera.

As a singer, Domingo's repertoire encompasses 130 stage roles – a number unmatched by any other celebrated tenor in history. His more than 100 recordings of complete operas, compilations of arias and duets, and crossover discs include Deutsche Grammophon's anthology of the complete Verdi arias for tenor and EMI's albums of Wagnerian roles that he has not sung on stage: Siegfried in both *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, and Tristan in a complete recording of *Tristan und Isolde*. His extensive work in the recording studio has earned him eleven Grammy Awards and two Latin Grammy Awards, and he was won Emmy awards for the television film "Homage to Seville" and for the Met's "Silver Gala" program. He has also made more than fifty music videos in addition to four feature films of operas: *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *Otello* and *Tosca*. He has conducted many opera performances with the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, and Los Angeles Opera, among many other ensembles, and symphonic concerts with the Chicago Symphony, National Symphony, London Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, and numerous other orchestras. In 1990, Domingo and his colleagues José Carreras and the late Luciano Pavarotti spontaneously formed the Three Tenors, which performed from time to time and with enormous success all over the world and attracted many new fans to opera.

Born in Madrid in 1941 to parents who were zarzuela performers, Plácido Domingo was brought to Mexico at the age of eight. He attended Mexico City's Conservatory of Music, where he initially studied piano and conducting, but when his vocal talent was discovered he began to take voice lessons as well. At eighteen, he made his debut in a small role (Borsa in *Rigoletto*) at Mexico's National Opera, and his first performance as a leading tenor (Alfredo in *La Traviata*) took place in the city of Monterrey when he was twenty. After having spent three seasons with the Israel National Opera in Tel Aviv, where he sang 280 performances of twelve different roles, he launched his major international career in 1965, and since then he has performed at all of the world's most prestigious opera houses.

In 1993, Domingo founded Operalia, an annual international voice competition, which has helped to start the careers of many singers who have since become major figures on the world's stages. He was also the prime mover behind Washington National Opera's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist program and Los Angeles Opera's Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program, both of which are designed to nurture and support the careers of opera's future standard-bearers. Domingo is also Artistic Advisor for the Youth Orchestra of the Americas.

Plácido Domingo has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in the United States as well as the titles of Commandant of the Legion of Honor in France, Honorary Knight of the British Empire, and both Grande Ufficiale and Cavaliere di Gran Croce of the Order of Merit

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of the Italian Republic. He has received honorary doctorates from Oxford University and New York University for his lifelong commitment and contribution to music and the arts. He has raised millions of dollars through benefit concerts to aid the victims of Mexico's devastating 1985 earthquake, of the floods caused by Hurricane Paulina in Guerrero and Yucatán, also in Mexico and in El Salvador, and of the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, where, in 2009, the stage of the Mahalia Jackson Theatre for the Performing Arts was named for him. In 2006, he conducted Verdi's Requiem Mass in Warsaw, to commemorate the first anniversary of Pope John Paul II's passing.

Although he has no intention of moving substantially into the baritone repertoire, during 2009-10 Domingo will be adding the title role of Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* – one of the greatest and most musically and emotionally demanding of all baritone parts – into his own repertoire, with performances at the Met, La Scala, Covent Garden, and Madrid's Teatro Real.

Newsweek and other international publications have fittingly described Plácido Domingo as “the King of Opera,” “a true renaissance man in music,” and “the greatest operatic artist of modern times.”