



February 4, 2009

Washington National Opera Porgy and Bess Bio

John Mauceri returns to the Kennedy Center and the Washington (National) Opera for a series of performances of Francesca Zambello's production of *Porgy & Bess*.

John is world famous as a Gershwin expert. His restorations and recordings have won him international fame and recognition. Leonore Gershwin, widow of lyricist Ira Gershwin, chose John to conduct the first of a series of restorations of musicals written by her husband and brother-in-law, George. Those two recordings, *Girl Crazy* and *Strike Up the Band*, became instant classics and garnered international awards. (*Girl Crazy* received the Edison Klassiek Award, Holland's highest award for a recording.) His Hollywood Bowl Orchestra recording for Philips Classics, called "The Gershwins in Hollywood" received a Deutsche Schallplatten Award (Germany's Grammy) and includes over an hour of previously unrecorded music by George Gershwin. In 2006, he supervised his major Gershwin restoration, the original 1935 production version of *Porgy & Bess*. Working from the original manuscripts, as well as the original conductor's score, the director's score, the stage manager's prompt book, rehearsal scores and the original orchestral parts, Mauceri, along with musicologist Charles Hamm and former Senior Music Specialist for the Library of Congress, performed and recorded this definitive version on Decca Records. That recording won France's highest recording award, the Diapason d'or.

John was music director of the Kennedy Center's Summer Opera at the Terrace Theater in 1978 and 79, and then was appointed Music Director of the Washington Opera the next year. He subsequently became Music Director of the Kennedy Center's Orchestras for over a decade and served as Consultant for Music Theater for the Center's Founding Chairman, Roger L. Stevens. John led new productions of *La Boheme* (directed by GianCarlo Menotti), Dominic Argento's *A Postcard from Morocco*, Donizetti's *Il furioso all'isola di San Domingo*, Rossini's *il barbiere di Siviglia*, Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, and Montemezzi's *l'Amore dei tre rei*. Other productions included *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Madama Butterfly*, Offenbach's *la belle Helene* and the Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of *Don Giovanni*.

For the Kennedy Center, John supervised and conducted new productions of Rodgers and Hart's *On Your Toes* (which subsequently went to Broadway and garnered him a Tony as Co-producer), Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel* (directed by James Hammerstein and choreographed by Peter Martins), and Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* (its tenth anniversary production, televised nationally) as well as Leonard Bernstein's *A Quiet Place*.

John has also conducted the Kennedy Center Honors on three occasions. In addition to his years as Music Director of the opera, he regularly appeared with the New York City Opera at the

Kennedy Center Opera House. He has appeared a number of times with the National Symphony and most notably conducted a series of concert performances of Wagner's *Das Rheingold* to unanimous critical acclaim.

Performances of *Porgy & Bess* begin on March 20 and continue at the Kennedy Center Opera House through April 3.