

For Immediate Release:

First Seville International Music Festival Suspended Until Further Notice

Ten-Day Festival Suspended, Which Was to Have Featured Nine Performances of Bizet's "Carmen" On Original Site and 28 Events Including Orchestral Concerts, Solo Recitals and Flamenco, Budgeted at 18,5 Mill. US. Dollars

The First Seville International Music Festival, to have taken place between September 2 and 12, has been suspended until further notice due to the withdrawal of the participation of Lorin Maazel. Maestro Maazel was to have served as the Music Director of "Carmen," the centerpiece of the Festival, comprising 80 % of its artistic activities, but was advised by doctors to curtail his conducting activities due to cataract surgery. The announcement came shortly before the August 15 rehearsal period was to begin.

While the Festival's Executive Producer Michael Ecker engaged in an intensive search for a replacement for Maestro Maazel to collaborate with stage director Carlos Saura on "Carmen," he found none of the same caliber available on such short notice.

The Festival's ticket sales, despite the current sluggish tourism climate, have been at a consistently high level. The event, billed as the first and largest of its kind in Seville, had expected to attract over 100,000 international visitors over the ten-day period. More than 1,000 participants, including opera luminaries such as Neil Shicoff, Olga Borodina, Angela Gheorghiu, Denyce Graves, and Ruggero Raimondi have been contracted for these performances of "Carmen." Those participating in the other events include London's Philharmonia Orchestra; The Russian National Orchestra, led by Mikhail Pletnev; Mstislav Rostropovich; Carlo Ponti Jr., with soloists Julian Rachlin and Maxim Vengerov; superstar pianist Lang Lang; as well as Flamenco stars like Jose Merce, Tomatito and Antonio Canales.

Packages and tickets remain valid. New dates for the Festival will be announced in due time.

Sevilla, August 4, 2004