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## **News Release**

*For Immediate Release*  
*January 31, 2007*

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### **International Opera Superstar Samuel Ramey Debuts in Home State**

WICHITA - International opera superstar and Metropolitan Opera Great, Samuel Ramey, makes his Kansas opera debut in Wichita Grand Opera's production of *Tosca*, on Friday, March 9, 2007. Ramey, a Kansas native, will be showcased as the evil Baron Scarpia, one of his signature roles. Known as the foremost interpreter and recorded artist of bass-baritone operatic repertoire, Ramey can be found regularly on the stages of the world's great opera houses.

Ramey's versatility has resulted in his being the most recorded bass in history with albums devoted to opera, concert music and crossover material on almost every existing label, such as Angel/EMI and Deutsche Grammophon, among others. He is also seen frequently on television programs including "Live from Lincoln Center," Metropolitan Opera telecasts, and PBS's "Great Performances."

Acclaimed for his rare histrionic abilities, Ramey is credited with having helped popularize opera through his realistic portrayals, which have also benefited from his splendid physique. When he sang *Attila*, The New York Times called Ramey "the Rambo of opera." People magazine put it this way, "Samuel Ramey is hot."

Ramey's humble beginnings gave no indication that a career of such dimensions was to come. Born in the small town of Colby, Kansas, he learned to love singing from his mother's fine voice and exposure to great music. Following high school, he participated in the apprentice program of the Central City Opera in Colorado. Ramey graduated from Wichita State University School of Music where he studied with baritone Arthur Newman. In the spring of 1973, he made a successful debut with the New York City Opera as Zuniga in *Carmen*. His career climbed steadily to international stardom with his repertoire

growing to more than 75 roles. Ramey was recognized as a renowned bass in major European opera houses by the time he made his Metropolitan Opera debut in Handel's *Rinaldo* in 1984. Among his distinguished honors, the French Ministry of Culture awarded him the rank of Commander in the Order of Arts and Letters.

Artist underwriting is provided by The Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation. "Sam Ramey is an international treasure with Kansas roots," said Liz Koch, president of the Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation. "He has performed on the stages of the world's greatest operas and we are pleased to play a role in making possible his Wichita Grand Opera debut."

Highlights of Ramey's 2006-2007 season include his tour-de-force double bill of Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle* and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* at the Washington National Opera; Don Basilio in *Barbiere di Siviglia* and the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlo* at the Metropolitan Opera; Mephistopheles in *Faust* at the Houston Grand Opera; Zaccharia in *Nabucco* at Rome's Caracalla Festival; the title-role of *Boris Godunov* in Madrid; a tour of ten concerts with Frederica von Stade; orchestral concerts featuring his signature opera roles in *A Date with the Devil*; and solo recitals on both sides of the Atlantic.

His wife, soprano Lindsey Larsen, and their son will accompany Ramey during his Wichita performance.

Tickets are on sale for \$80, \$50 and \$30, and may be purchased by calling the Wichita Grand Opera Box Office at 316.262.8054 or online at [www.selectaseat.com](http://www.selectaseat.com).

For more information about the Wichita Grand Opera 2006-2007 season, visit [www.WichitaGrandOpera.org](http://www.WichitaGrandOpera.org).