

NEWS RELEASE

ROLEX ANNOUNCES FIRST LONDON PRESENTATION OF GLOBAL ARTS MENTORING PROGRAMME

MAJOR NEW SPONSORSHIPS WITH ROYAL OPERA HOUSE AND TATE ALSO ANNOUNCED

London, 20 May 2009 – Rolex announced today a series of public events around its international philanthropic arts programme, the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, which is coming to London for the first time in December 2009.

Rebecca Horn, Jiří Kylián, Youssou N'Dour, Martin Scorsese, Wole Soyinka and Kate Valk, mentors of the 2008-2009 cycle of the programme, will be in London and attend workshops, talks and performances to showcase the work of talented young artists they have selected for a year of artistic exchange. The events, to be held Friday 4 December and Saturday 5 December, will take place at Tate Modern, the Theatre Royal Haymarket, BFI Southbank, Union Chapel and Sadler's Wells.

These public events will be followed by a gala evening at the Royal Opera House on Sunday 6 December to celebrate the achievements of the current mentor-protégé pairs and to announce the renowned artists who will serve as mentors in the 2010-2011 cycle.

Alongside the London events of the Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, Rolex also announced today a new relationship with the Royal Opera House, including sponsorship of two major productions: *La Traviata* starring Renée Fleming (2009) and *Simon Boccanegra* starring Plácido Domingo (2010), and a new association with Tate to sponsor a forthcoming retrospective of John Baldessari, a past participant in the Rolex Arts Initiative, at Tate Modern from 13 October 2009 through 10 January 2010.

These new relationships add to the existing Rolex support of Sadler's Wells, which includes the production of *Eonagata* by Sylvie Guillem, Robert Lepage and Russell Maliphant, and a long-standing partnership to showcase the work of young dancers.

“Since launching the Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative seven years ago, we have sought to give opportunities to talented young artists from around the world to learn first-hand from the world's great masters,” said Rebecca Irvin, head of the programme. “Working with our distinguished partners in London, we are proud to be able to offer a public platform for these emerging talents. To coincide with this first presentation of the Arts Initiative in London, we are also very pleased to help support Tate, the Royal Opera House and Sadler's Wells.”

Nicholas Serota, Director of Tate, said: “As a long-term admirer of the Mentor and Protégé programme, I am delighted to have been a member of the Advisory Board this year. Looking ahead, we are enormously grateful to Rolex for its support in presenting the major retrospective of John Baldessari this autumn.”

Elaine Padmore, Director of Opera at the Royal Opera House, said: “Rolex’s support is a major contribution to our work. In particular they are helping new audiences enjoy world-class opera through broadcasting highlights of *Simon Boccanegra* for free on our website for a limited period and also supporting an interactive, online exhibition to enable people to understand and learn more about opera.”

Alistair Spalding, Director of Sadler’s Wells, said: “Our relationship with Rolex began in 2006 when I joined the Advisory Board of the Mentor-Protégé Initiative. We have presented some of the talented artists involved in the mentoring programme at Sadler’s Wells. In this and in its innovative sponsorships, Rolex really demonstrates commitment to culture.”

Media enquiries:

Ms. Jill Morrison

The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, P.O. Box 1311

1211 Geneva 26, Switzerland

rmp@rolex.com

Tel: +41 22 302 22 00, Fax: +41 22 302 25 85

Note on the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative:

Founded in 2002, the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative brings talented young artists together with renowned figures in all fields of the arts for a year of individual guidance. The master artists who have participated as mentors are: John Baldessari, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Sir Colin Davis, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, William Forsythe, Stephen Frears, Sir Peter Hall, David Hockney, Rebecca Horn, Jiří Kylián, Toni Morrison, Youssou N’Dour, Mira Nair, Jessye Norman, Martin Scorsese, Álvaro Siza, Wole Soyinka, Julie Taymor, Saburo Teshigawara, Kate Valk, Mario Vargas Llosa, Robert Wilson and Pinchas Zukerman.

rolexmentorprotege.com