



## MANITOBA OPERA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 26, 2014

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
Darlene Ronald 204-255-0508  
Dronald84@shaw.ca

### MANITOBA OPERA POSTS SMALL LOSS ON 2013/14 SEASON

Manitoba Opera announced this evening at its Annual General Meeting (AGM), held at the Manitoba Museum in Winnipeg, that for the year ending May 31, 2014, the company posted a loss of \$21,316 (1.2%) on an operating budget of \$1,816,482. This marks just the second time since 2000 that Manitoba Opera has posted an operating loss on a season. The loss is attributed to box office revenue reaching 85% of the budgeted goal, as well as a reduction in funding of \$7,100 from the Canada Council for the Arts. Manitoba Opera's accumulated debt at year end is \$240,065, well down from \$654,000 in 2000.

Subscription revenue for the 41<sup>st</sup> season reached 95% of budget goal; however, Manitoba Opera's production of Donizetti's comedy, *Don Pasquale* last November, though well received critically, did not reach its single ticket sales goal. The much-loved Puccini classic, *La Bohème*, which closed the season in April, reached 86% of its single ticket revenue goal.

"Artistically, the 2013/14 season was a great success," said Larry Desrochers, General Director and CEO. "I'm thrilled that we are able to attract such wonderful artists to work on our productions. It is particularly exciting when we can feature local artists in important roles such as Lara Ciekiewicz as Musetta (*La Bohème*) and Nikki Einfeld (now living in San Francisco) as Norina in *Don Pasquale*. Despite the small loss in box office revenue this season and the cut in funding from the Canada Council, Manitoba Opera continues to play a leading role in our community as a cultural organization essential to the quality of life in Manitoba."

Community support of Manitoba Opera remains strong as evidenced from fundraising efforts. Contributions from all campaigns were up significantly over 2012/13. Sponsorships were up by 11%; corporate annual gifts increased by 3%; personal gifts over \$1250 were up by 11%; and major gifts increased by 88%. Fundraising through special events also increased by 30% over the previous season.

"We were very pleased to see an increase in donations in most areas of our fundraising efforts this season," commented Jennifer Snyder, Outgoing Chair of the Manitoba Opera Board of Trustees. "It is gratifying to know that the community values the work we do from providing educational opportunities for children and jobs for artists of all kinds, to presenting wonderful opera productions. We are grateful to all the individual donors, corporate supporters, and public funders for their continued financial support."

## 2. Manitoba Opera 2013/14 Annual General Meeting Media Release

Manitoba Opera continues to enrich the opera experiences of patrons by presenting a wide range of audience engagement events throughout the season. These included the Opera Primer sessions with music expert Don Anderson; a presentation on the upcoming season by Will Berger of the Metropolitan Opera in the fall; pre-show dinners and opera talks by comedian Al Rae; the biennial Open House which enabled more than 100 people to go backstage and learn about producing opera; a presentation on bohemia, and an afternoon at a French café with the artists of *La Bohème*; over 1,900 students, including 24 rural schools travelling from as far away as Russell and Swan River, attending the dress rehearsals through Student Night at the Opera; and special events including Dinner at DeLuca's, the Opening Night Dinner in November, and the Bravo Gala in March.

Complimentary tickets were also distributed through a number of community organizations, providing an opportunity to experience an opera to those who might not normally be able to do so.

The 2014/15 Board of Trustees was also announced at the AGM. Returning trustees are Robert Vineberg (Chair), Jennifer Snyder (Past Chair), Wayne Benson (Vice-Chair), Dr. Tony Iacopino (Secretary), Dr. Robert Biscontri (Treasurer), Liz Barron, Brent Bottomley, Abbie Grieder, Elba Haid, Peter Heavysage, Dr. Amanda Huminicki, Sue Jurkovic, and Heather Sarna.

New trustees elected to the Board are Dr. Hermann Lee, Dr. Henri Marcoux, Dr. Jeffrey Sisler, and Ian Trump. (See attached for brief biographies of the new trustees.)

Retiring from the Board of Trustees are The Honourable Christopher J. Mainella and Carolin Taubensee.

Incoming Board Chair, Robert Vineberg, noted the important role of Manitoba Opera within our community: "Winnipeg is more than just houses and businesses. Great cities have strong infrastructure that adds value to the greater whole. Airports and hospitals, rapid transit and schools, stadiums and theatres, hockey teams and opera companies benefit the entire city, even if you personally never take advantage of them. They are all amenities making Winnipeg better and more hospitable. They attract jobs, people, and businesses to this community. Opera in Winnipeg improves our collective quality of life. That is why the members of our board are so committed to the success of Manitoba Opera."

Manitoba Opera launches its 42<sup>nd</sup> season in 2014/15 with *Fidelio*, Beethoven's only opera on **November 22, 25, and 28**. Beethoven's powerful ode to freedom was selected to commemorate the opening of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. This will be the first time in the company's history that the opera has been staged.

The season will close with Puccini's final opera *Turandot* on **April 18, 21, and 24**. Set in ancient Peking, *Turandot*, with its breathtaking pageantry and lush music, is music drama par excellence and has not been presented by Manitoba Opera since 1996.

Both productions will take place at the Centennial Concert Hall.

Subscriptions are now on sale and single tickets for both productions will be available beginning in early October. To order tickets, call 204-957-7842 or go to [www.manitobaopera.mb.ca](http://www.manitobaopera.mb.ca)

**MANITOBA OPERA BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2014/15 SEASON  
NEW TRUSTEES**

- **Dr. Hermann Lee** came to Winnipeg almost 30 years ago from the US, after his training in dentistry and specialty in orthodontics. Besides his full-time practice, he is very involved in the community and serves in various capacities for many non-profit organizations involving math to music. Dr. Lee is an amateur pianist whose CV includes a performance for Her Majesty the Queen during her visit to Manitoba in 2010.

- **Dr. Henri Marcoux** graduated as a chiropractor in 1966 and currently has a practice in St. Boniface. Born into a family where musical interests were encouraged, he gained an appreciation for opera from his father at a young age. He was a jazz drummer with his own band from the ages of 18 to 22 and also plays the guitar.

Dr. Marcoux was involved with Festival du Voyageur from 1973 to 1983 and served as president in 1979. He races a Honda with the Winnipeg Sports Car Club where he has been a member for over 41 years and was also a race official for 10 years. He self-published a book this year: "Stay Fat: Be Who You Are. The Paradox of Weight Management."

- **Dr. Jeffrey Sisler** is a Winnipeg family physician and serves as an Associate Dean of the College of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. He created and led the UPCON program at CancerCare Manitoba which supports close collaboration between primary care and the cancer system.

Dr. Sisler is a music lover and performer, with a long history of participation in choral music groups and light opera with The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Winnipeg. Drawn to opera by a Manitoba Opera summer recital years ago at Victoria Beach, he and his wife Cathy (and friends) have attended regularly ever since. A trip to the Met in 2009 to see *Tosca* was a quasi-religious experience which sealed the deal! Dr. Sisler knows the value and challenge of running a professional opera company in a small city and is pleased to be able to contribute to MO's success.

- **Ian Trump**, CD, CPM, BA is an ITIL certified information technology (IT) consultant with 17 years of experience in IT security and information technology. Ian maintains a strong commitment to the security community: he is a board member of the Canadian Cyber Defense Challenge and IC2, as well as an editorial review board member for the EDP Audit, Control, and Security newsletter. From 1989 to 1992, Ian served with the Canadian Forces (CF), Military Intelligence Branch. In 2002, he joined the CF Military Police Reserves and retired as a public affairs officer in 2013. He is currently managing all IT projects for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Mr. Trump previously served for two seasons on the Manitoba Opera Board of Trustees in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

////////////////////