



MANITOBA OPERA

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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Irving Guttman,
Long-time Artistic Director of Manitoba Opera &
"Father of Western Canadian Opera" dies at 86

Dr. Irving Guttman, C.M., artistic director of Manitoba Opera for 21 years, died in Vancouver on Sunday, December 7, at the age of 86, following a lengthy illness. Dr. Guttman was known as the "Father of Western Canadian Opera." He was hired by Manitoba Opera in 1973 to direct the company's first full production, *Madama Butterfly*. He went on to direct over 35 other productions for the company and was the artistic director from 1977 to 1998.

He was also founding artistic director of companies in Vancouver, Edmonton, and Regina and contributed immeasurably to the birth and artistic growth of these companies and opera in Canada. Prior to him becoming the founding artistic director of Vancouver Opera in 1960, there were no professional opera companies west of Ontario. Guttman also directed productions for opera companies throughout North America and Europe.

"Irving Guttman was truly a pioneer. It's quite likely that opera in Western Canada would not have grown as quickly as it did without his involvement. He leaves a legacy unmatched in this country," commented Larry Desrochers, General Director & CEO. "Not only did he lead Manitoba Opera through its formative years, he directed hundreds of productions throughout Canada and the United States. We all owe him a huge debt of gratitude."

Guttman was renowned for his ability to discover singers and foster young talent. He had an uncanny ability to spot future stars like Tracy Dahl, Richard Margison, and Ben Heppner and guided the careers of internationally acclaimed artists including Maureen Forrester, Judith Forst, Tracy Dahl, and Phillip Ens.

"Dr Irving Guttman was my mentor and friend. I owe him a great debt of gratitude for the number of opportunities he gave me here in Winnipeg and in Edmonton," commented Tracy Dahl. "Irving had an amazing gift of finding new talent and helping to build that talent into international careers. He was, if you will, an architect of opera singers. He understood the voice like no other and how they would sound together. Beyond all that was on the stage, was his passion for the art and the people who sang it. I feel his loss terribly."