



MANITOBA OPERA

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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***MANITOBA OPERA 2014/15 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:* COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HALLMARK OF EXCEPTIONAL SEASON**

Manitoba Opera announced this evening at its 2014/15 Annual General Meeting (AGM), held at the Centennial Concert Hall in Winnipeg, that community engagement was the hallmark of an exceptional season that also saw the company post a surplus of \$5,549 on an operating budget of \$2,015,501. This marks the 12th time in the past 15 seasons that Manitoba Opera has posted a surplus on the season. Manitoba Opera's accumulated debt at year end (May 31, 2015) was \$234,198, down from \$654,000 in 2000.

"Across the board, the 2014/15 season was one of the company's finest," said Larry Desrochers, General Director and CEO. "From the inclusion of 50 former refugees in *Fidelio* to the pageantry of *Turandot*, from the wide array of audience engagement events to the breakthrough performances of local artists, this season was filled with awe-inspiring and unforgettable moments."

More than 1,300 people attended 22 audience engagement events and activities throughout the season. Events ranged from a walking tour of Brutalist architecture to an afternoon of Chinese tea tasting and also included performances, lectures, dinners, a film screening, panel discussion, and demonstrations. Through Student Night at the Opera, 2,020 students, including many from 18 rural schools travelling from as far away as Boissevain and Wanipigow, attended the dress rehearsals of both productions. Special events including Dinner at De Luca's, the Opening Night Dinner in November, and Bravo Gala in March were also all very well attended.

Almost 900 subsidized and complimentary tickets were also distributed through a number of service organizations, enabling people from all over the community to experience a live opera performance, many for the first time. New Canadians, former refugees, immigrants, military personnel and clients and members of organizations including Big Brothers Big Sisters, Independent Living Resource Centre, Main Street Project, and the Misericordia Health Centre were among the recipients.

Subscription sales for the 42nd season exceeded budget goal, reaching 106% for revenues of \$349,655. From 2013/14 to 2014/15, subscriptions increased by 9% from 2,683 to 2,917 and single ticket sales increased by 6%, from 2,591 to 2,737. Total box office revenues increased by 9% from \$527,854 the previous season to \$575,138 in 2014/15.

2. Manitoba Opera 2014/15 Annual General Meeting Media Release

Fundraising efforts were well received by the community again this season with increases seen in almost all campaigns. Major gifts increased by \$49,894, which is 63% over 2013/14; sponsorships were up by \$23,600 or 22%; personal gifts over \$1,250 rose by 19%; and Friends' gifts under \$1,250 also saw an increase of 3%.

"It was very gratifying to see not only our performances, but also our community engagement and fundraising initiatives being embraced by the community," commented Robert Vineberg, Chair of the Manitoba Opera Board of Trustees. "Our intent is to present great opera, with themes relevant to our time and our world; themes that engage our patrons and resonate with our community. The support we received in 2014/15 is a strong indication that the community agrees with our approach and wants to be a part of it. We are so appreciative of all the support received from our individual donors, corporate supporters, and public funders."

The 2015/16 Board of Trustees was also announced at the AGM. Returning trustees are Robert Vineberg (Chair), Jennifer Snyder (Past Chair), Wayne Benson (Vice Chair), Dr. Anthony Iacopino (Secretary), Dr. Robert Biscontri (Treasurer), Brent Bottomley, Abbie Grieder, Elba Haid, Dr. Amanda Huminicki, Sue Jurkovic, Dr. Hermann Lee, Dr. Henri Marcoux, Luisa Matheson, Heather Sarna, and Dr. Jeffrey Sisler.

New trustees elected to the Board are Leona Herzog, Dr. William (Bill) Pope, Kimberley Puhach, and David White (See attached for brief biographies of the new trustees). Retiring from the Board of Trustees are Liz Barron, Peter Heavysege, and Ian Trump.

Manitoba Opera launches its 43rd season with Mozart's comic tour de force, *The Marriage of Figaro*, November 21, 24, and 27. The season will close with the Manitoba premiere of *Of Mice and Men*, the faithful retelling of Steinbeck's literary classic. Composed by revered American composer Carlisle Floyd, the opera will be presented April 23, 26, and 29. 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 September. To order tickets, call 204-957-7842 or go to www.manitobaopera.mb.ca

**MANITOBA OPERA BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2015/16 SEASON
NEW TRUSTEES**

LEONA HERZOG

Previously on the Board from 2005 to 2010, Leona Herzog has returned after completing her Master of Arts in Cultural Studies at the University of Winnipeg. She will be chairing the Audience Engagement Committee, a committee on which she also previously served.

Ms. Herzog brings many years of management experience to the Board and has sat on a number of committees during her career. She currently serves on the University of Manitoba Art Collections Committee and is a board member for the Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art.

DR. WILLIAM (BILL) POPE

Dr. Pope has been Section Head of Adult Anesthesia at the HSC, Program Director in Anesthesiology and Undergraduate Associate Dean at the University of Manitoba, as well as the Chief Oral Examiner in Anesthesia for the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. He recently retired as CEO and Registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, a position he held since 1999.

Besides the numerous committees he has sat on related to health administration, Dr. Pope is also very involved in the community, providing service to social and arts organizations over the years including the WSO, RWB, United Way, PLAN Canada and St. John's College (University of Manitoba). Dr. Pope previously served on the Manitoba Opera Board of Trustees.

KIMBERLEY PUHACH

A strategic leader with over 20 years of experience, Kimberley Puhach has spent the greater part of her career in business and had developed expertise in the areas of management, sales, and marketing. She is currently a consultant with Leaders & Co., a recruitment agency specializing in board members, executives, and leadership succession.

Ms. Puhach is the co-chair of Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. (Those Who Lead), an Indigenous community organization, and is a mentor for young Indigenous women.

DAVID WHITE

David M. White is District Vice President of TD Canada Trust, an organization for which he has worked since 1984. He is an accomplished sales leader, executive and manager.

Mr. White has been involved with various organizations including Junior Achievement of Manitoba, Human Resources Association of Manitoba, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and currently also sits on the board for the SMD Foundation.

